E. O. HOPPÉ

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AFTERTHOUGHTS

by

FRANCES
COUNTESS OF WARWICK

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION xiii

CHAPTER ONE

THE VICTORIAN ERA AS A BACKGROUND 1

Girlish impressions of the Queen; making Europe one huge family; rigid control of the Prince of Wales; a remarkable character study; moulded by the Prince Consort; a ruler of men and women; his early life; the Victorian sense of duty; Lady Ely and Lady Churchill; Baron Stockmar; an "Ideal Constitution" for Great Britain; rigid Court propriety; Arts and Sciences; a Labour Government; our democratic Prince; "over there"; King Edward as an Ambassador; Princess May; a new type of foreign relations.

CHAPTER TWO

A POPULAR PRINCE OF WALES 10

The Kaiser and his uncle; Prince of Wales's admiration for the German people; the Entente Cordiale; the Empress Frederick; education for the masses; the Tsar Alexander; the King's journey to Reval; a mixed Russian choir; police strictness; King Alfonso; King Leopold of the Belgians; Easton Lodge; the King's interest in gardening; Osborne House; dislike of Court tittle-tattle; Society nurses and the Boer War; Queen Alexandra; an ideal hostess; Rose Day; King Edward's devotion to duty; as an impromptu speaker; interest in animals; his courage; his visit to Paris; Sir John Fisher; Lord Haldane; the Marquis de Soveral; the reduction of shipbuilding; Sir Ernest Cassel; Mr. Asquith's visit to Biarritz; King Edward's failing health; religion and the hereafter; Cardinal Manning; the King's death.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THRONE AND DEMOCRACY 23

The strain of Government; "Life and Letters of Queen Victoria"; King Edward as a Monarch; the great families of Britain; Lord Salisbury and the "Hotel Cecil"; the Royal prerogative; the power of the Exchequer to-day; Domestic politics or Foreign affairs; a ragging in the Guards; marriage of Princess Ena of Battenberg; the Coronation Oath; my revolt against tradition; the unpardonable sin; the Liberal peers; Lord Esher; Sir Francis Knollys; Lord Salisbury; Lord Balfour; Lord Lansdowne; Mr. Asquith; Lord Rosebery; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; the King's love of amusement; Sir Walter Parratt; classical music and the Opera; Melton Prior.

CHAPTER FOUR

PAGE

THE MARLBOROUGH HOUSE SET 37

The pursuit of pleasure; duty was a big word then; the hurry and scurry of modern life; no outlet for the Prince; influence of the Press; the middle classes and the tradesmen; country house entertainment; Royalty for the week-end; nerves and obesity; Continental spas; Homburg and Marienbad; the glamour of Marlborough House; the Jews; artists, writers, musicians; the Opera; good mothers in those days; Stone Hall; my "Garden of Friendship"; loyalty and devotion; why I became a Socialist; Robert Blatchford.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL HOSTESSES 44

The Treasury and the great estates; the choice of guests when Royalty was present; a rendezvous for men of all opinions; influence upon their own sex; Petticoat influence; the Duke of Devonshire and Joseph Chamberlain; posts for relatives or friends; who were the great hostesses of those days, political or social? Queen Victoria and the old Duchess of Sutherland; no "gate crashers"; Theresa, Lady Londonderry; Duchess of Buccleuch; Lord and Lady Salisbury; Monte Carlo; gambling and pigeon shooting; the ghastly horror of mutilated birds; the Rothschilds; Lady Granville; Stafford House under my sister; political receptions were a costly business; wonderful masses of flowers; Duke of Norfolk's Roman Catholic receptions; a great Postmaster-General; receptions or dances; Marlborough House.

CHAPTER SIX

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL 55

The three periods of my life; a ward in Chancery; "easy-go" trustees; my father as Colonel of the "Blues"; a collection of theological books; the gamekeeper's cottage; my affection for Easton; Lord Rosslyn; Queen Victoria's fondness for my stepfather; "My Lady"; the classics; Disraeli and the Lyceum; the Duke of Albany; Ellen Terry; a white frock with a blue sash; my mother's cast-off frocks cut down for me; my engagement and marriage; some letters from the ill-fated Prince.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PEEPS AT SOCIETY PEOPLE 63

The Marchioness of Ailesbury; "Lady A"; the morning papers; coachmen and footmen; Lord Ailesbury and the Bishop; Lady Charles Beresford; the sporting mind; Sidney Grenville; Sir John Gorst; Lord Salisbury; equerry to King Edward; private secretary to Queen Alexandra; the present Prince of Wales; the Grenville Memoirs; Henry Chaplin; a broken romance;

PAGE

double dealing and double doors; Lady Florence Leveson-Gower; the Board of Agriculture; a sixteen-course dinner; the Amphytryon Club; Hugh, Earl of Lonsdale; Lady Florence Dixie; her tame jaguar; Tom Firr, the huntsman; trotting wagons; International Horse Shows at Olympia; performing animals; the "Double Duchess"; Violet, Duchess of Rutland; intellectual women.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRINCIPALLY ABOUT MONEY 79

Distrust of Bohemianism; the theatre as wicked, immoral and indecent; Lady Diana Duff-Cooper and Lady Mercy Dean; Lady Randolph Churchill; Winston as a schoolboy; Conservative or Liberal; Cecil Rhodes upon Duty; the Empire as a dream; the British Commonwealth; the Empire-builder; the Rhodes Scholarships; Anatole France and human happiness; South African magnates; the Rothschilds; Alfred and Leopold; the park-keeper and the millionaire; the Empire Theatre; Baron Ferdinand; Waddesdon Manor; draggled geraniums; the magic power of money; a private zoo; Sir Ernest Cassel; effect of education on the higher classes; working men in the House of Commons; Brook House; striking resemblance between King Edward and Sir Ernest Cassel; fire at Easton Lodge; revival of music in Society; Sir Arthur Sullivan; Lord Beaconsfield's dinners.

CHAPTER NINE

SPORT AND SPORTSMEN, AND A FEW OTHERS. . . 95

Society etiquette; gambling; King Edward and Bridge; tips; Lord Warwick receives a tip; the King's trees at Easton Lodge; Arthur Balfour plays golf; week-end parties; yachting at Cowes; Royal Yacht Squadron; women owners of yachts; the Highlands; Henley Regatta; the Duke of Westminster; my first race meeting; my gardening friends; Mark Lockwood; Lord Lambourne as Lord Lieutenant of Essex; a Royal guest who did not smile; a difficult question of precedence; private theatricals; Princess Henry of Pless; night clubs; Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry; a "die-hard" indeed; Lloyd George; Sir George Lewis; Devonshire House; the historical Fancy Dress Ball; the split between the Liberals and Conservatives.

CHAPTER TEN

MASTERFUL AMERICANS 109

William Waldorf Astor; *Pall Mall Magazine;* Astor's estate at Hever; the gardens and that wall; his views upon books; an aristocracy not educated; "In the Library"; Carlton House Terrace; the estate office on the Embankment; locked in; the strong-room; bags of gold coins; Southern Italy; Will Thorne; opposition from W. W. Astor; poor relations; Thomas Edison; films as a form of education; "Some idea, I'll say!"; Joseph

PAGE

Choate; democratic Universities; Chauncey Depew; my first cocktail; President Roosevelt; how to govern Egypt; Woodrow Wilson; Clemenceau; Lloyd George; Colonel House; Eugene Debs.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

POLITICAL PERSONALITIES 124

Arthur Balfour; a big man; "Defence of Philosophic Doubt"; "Bright Young People"; the "Souls"; teaching Mr. Asquith to ride a bicycle; Arthur Balfour and marriage; Olympic games; George Nathaniel Curzon; intense nervous reserve; as Viceroy; the Indian people; Lord Curzon's weak physique; the Far East; some telephone calls; two naughty girls; Lord Curzon's anger; Lord Rosebery; Hannah Rothschild; Mentmore; Neil Primrose; insomnia; the Agricultural Show speech; Lady Sybil Grant; her caravan; the Epsom gipsies; when Rosebery and Asquith quarrelled; Gladstone's opinion of Lord Rosebery; Stanley Baldwin; Lloyd George; Band of Hope meeting; intoxicated with his own words; Cobden or Bright as a comparison.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MEN OF MENTALITY 138

Lord Tennyson; the throne-like chair; Edward Carpenter; vivisection; Sir Oliver Lodge; limitations of Materialism; Edith Cavell; wonderful discoveries in physics; Dickens, Charles Reade and Thackeray; Edison; the old public-houses; gaols for sale; W. T. Stead; his trip to Russia; the Tsar and his people; Nihilism; Cecil Rhodes; the Rhodes Scholarships; R. B. Cunninghame Graham; Annie Besant; "Bloody Sunday"; John Burns; Bow Street Police Court; Herbert Burrows; the New Thought Movement; William Morris, the poet; prison experiences of Stead and Graham; Scottish Nationalist Movement; W. H. Hudson; "Rima" memorial; modern music; Holloway Prison sparrows; the Easton sanctuary; the protection of wild life; Stead and the traffic in children; Theosophical Society; Madame Blavatsky; Hyndman and Stead; John Burns and Stead; "Julia," the guiding spirit; the fateful voyage of the *Titanic;* my lecture tour in the States; Upton Sinclair; an uncompromising Socialist; "The Jungle"; Welsh Miners prefer cheese; Mr. Jaurès, the French Socialist; Viviani and Briand; Mussolini.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAINLY FEMININE 150

Great men and great wives; Catherine Wells; her courage; her roses; Mrs. Bernard Shaw; her husband's health; G.B.S. as Father Christmas; *St. Joan;* Highlanders and the "little people"; the Duke of Argyll; "Johnnie Campbell"; the "Bogle" of the woods; Mull spells; Warwick Castle ghosts;

PAGE

two frightened nurses; brilliant women; Rachel and Margaret McMillan; Deptford baby centre; Mrs. Pankhurst; Lady Constance dances barefoot; sun-bathers; snakes; my pet monkeys and the jam; Elinor Glyn; the too-lovely bride; MS. of "Letters of Elizabeth"; Edmund Yates; Mrs. Glyn's two daughters; screen work at Hollywood; the question of dress and fashion; Worth, of Paris; Doucet, Poiret and Caret; Jean Worth and his clients; my Marie Antoinette costume; every gown an advertisement; lingerie; the Parisian *vendeuse;* woman's altered form; Lady de Grey and Madame von Andre; Grand Opera; Jean and Edouard de Reszke; Madame Melba; Lord de Grey; Christie's; Gladys, Lady Ripon; my sister, Millicent Sutherland; the tragedy of her life.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SPORT AND BOHEMIA 165

The Racing Set; gambling; card-playing for money; people called "creditors"; Newmarket Heath; ideal holiday; early morning ride; no crowd then; all our intimates were present; Ascot and Goodwood; Windsor Forest; a pageant of dress, and chemises; Epsom; the Royal special train; Persimmon's Derby; hunting in my early days; the *Britannia* at Cowes; the sea is not friendly; Mother Earth; flowers and funerals; Lord Desborough; Willie Grenfell and Niagara; Lord Gage and the rats; Lord Grey of Fallodon; W. G. Grace at Easton; Rodin, that great artist; Anatole France; Sargent; why he changed to landscapes; G. F. Watts; old Lady Warwick; Sir Richard Wallace; "La Bagatelle"; the secret panel; Ellen Terry and Henry Irving; Alfred Gilbert; Sarah Bernhardt; Duse and Modjeska; Irving's nervousness; Lily Langtry; beauty and time; Charlie Chaplin; Mary Pickford; H. G. Wells and "The Flood"; the village carpenter.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BOOKS AND THE PRESS 183

Single-minded men; Stanley Baldwin; Lord Irwin; Sir Oliver Lodge; Walter Rathenau; London's East-end; German labour conditions; Vernon Hartshorn and Stephen Walsh; plight of the worker-leader; Philip Snowden; influence of books; I act as Poor Law Guardian; make your own mistakes; Scott, Dickens and Thackeray; "Story of an African Farm"; Edward Bellamy and "Looking Backward"; Robert Blatchford's "Merrie England"; not a lover of poetry; W. H. Hudson; modern philosophers and psycho-analysts; Memoirs; honest criticism needed to-day; the Press and social life; Prince of Wales and a wider society; the Press photographer; Mr. Buckle of *The Times;* Sir Donald Wallace; Lord Salisbury's articles for the *Saturday Review;* Lord Glenesk; Lord Burnham of the

PAGE

Daily Telegraph ; the chorus girl's photograph ; Statesmen depend upon the Press ; Frederick Greenwood ; Temperance reformers ; abuse of alcohol ; modern girls and night clubs ; the New Club and the actresses ; Kate Vaughan ; Connie Gilchrist ; " Skittles " ; strict etiquette for girls ; when we went to Holyrood ; love for our homes ; James Brown, High Commissioner for Scotland ; Holyrood modernized ; lost in Windsor Castle ; the wrong bedroom.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

OUR ANTIQUATED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM . . . 201

A novel rôle ; Society and the financiers ; public confidence and public money ; empty titles ; our antiquated educational system ; French, German and Spanish ; the worship of the god Sport ; parental effort wasted ; a nation of snobs ; brains in the commercial world ; week-ends and leisure ; work a disagreeable necessity ; drifting into the House of Commons ; a leadership ; no room for an idle class ; education in practical affairs ; the *Outspoken Review ;* the friendly financier ; no money required ; " What could you expect ? " ; Duke of Northumberland ; Sankey Report on the Coal situation ; the agricultural labourer ; the divine right of Dukes ; the agricultural labourer is at heart conservative ; his contact with Mother Nature ; his objection to Council houses ; a glorified Workhouse ; the thatch-and-plaster cottage of his youth ; opening the windows ; the Queen's Nurses ; no temptation to remain on the land ; political propaganda ; village indignation ; mechanized agriculture ; starving schoolchildren.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE MEN OF THE GREAT WAR 216

Sir John French ; M. Clemenceau ; a momentous interview ; I act as interpreter ; the " Tiger " ; the Entente ; a plan for mobilization ; a dangerous scrap of paper ; Lord Kitchener ; not a woman-hater ; the stimulus of work in a tired man ; a curio-hunter ; Ben Tillett ; French and Haig ; misunderstandings ; the British Legion ; poison gas ; an accursed thing ; Lord Haldane and the War ; a great German scholar ; Israel Zangwill ; Germany had no need for war ; Dr. Sthamer ; a hostile Foreign Office ; hysterical hatred ; Duke of Rutland ; the Empress Frederick.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE ADVENT OF LABOUR 229

A Victorian of to-day ; Mr. Gladstone and his peers ; advantages of the Conservative Party ; Labour and the leaders of Society ; Mrs. Snowden ; a red light ; rulers for hundreds of years ; the old traditions destroyed by taxes ; " Niggers " ; born to serve ; the reward of good deeds ; Mrs. Bridges Adams ; Will Thorne ; John Clynes ; Sir John Gorst ; William Morris ; Walter Crane,

PAGE

the cartoonist of Socialism ; Cobden Sanderson ; Bradlaugh's sweep at Northampton ; a " Savoy " dinner ; Herbert Morrison ; Arthur Greenwood ; Dr. Hugh Dalton ; Susan Lawrence ; George Lansbury ; slums and railings ; Lord Melchett ; the most enduring memorial.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE STATELY HOMES OF ENGLAND 239

The old owners cannot maintain them to-day ; value of sentiment in education ; death duties ; everything must be in harmony ; living in one's coachman's cottage ; Warwick Castle not a home ; Easton Lodge ; Haddon Hall and Chatsworth ; effect of the motor-car ; " Lady Bountiful " ; a system of serfdom ; when the Family went to Church ; effect on trade ; the question of precedence ; the Servants' Hall ; modern farmers more independent ; bicycles, the Cinema, and Wireless ; medical inspection of children ; the big town houses ; " What shadows we pursue ! " ; Dorchester House ; Beauty and the Beast ; Mr. and Mrs. Holford ; curio collecting ; Weston Birt now a school ; bedroom accommodation inadequate ; labour-saving devices ; Victorian architectural atrocities ; Wentworth and its three hundred bedrooms ; Chatsworth ; Welbeck Abbey ; Easton Lodge Visitors' Book of 1882 ; earthquake in the Midlands ; the Prince of Pless and a practical joker ; etiquette of Royal visits ; standing in the Royal Presence ; the Prince Consort and Sir Lyon Playfair ; precedence at the dinner table ; politics taboo ; Lord Beaconsfield's cuisine ; the Rothschilds ; importance of punctuality ; Lady Laurier's oversight ; informal luncheons ; Lady Dorothy Neville.

CHAPTER TWENTY

CONCERNING ROYAL MARRIAGES 261

The Duke and Duchess of Teck ; great expenses and responsibilities ; a beautiful dancer ; Princess May ; Lord Athlone and his wife ; Prince Francis of Teck ; a " confidential friend " ; the Middlesex Hospital ; the Duke of Connaught ; Hail-fellow-well-met ; the Duchess and her children ; experiences in Canada ; the Duchess of Fife ; Princess Victoria ; Princess Maud ; Queen of Norway ; King Haakon ; the late Duke of Fife ; little Princess Elizabeth ; popular intrusion on Royal privacy ; the last century of Kingship ; England and refugee Royalty ; the King of Rumania ; Mr. Gladstone and the position of Royalty ; the Empress Frederick ; the Queen of Spain ; Ena of Battenberg ; the unhappy Tsarina ; Rasputin ; the ailing young Russian Prince ; defying the laws of nature ; Rasputin's so-called miracles ; possible hypnotic healing ; his sinister prophecy ; modern marriage and divorce ; difficulty of Royal love matches ; Princess Hélène of Orleans.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

PAGE

THE SPADEWORK OF A LIFE . . . AND AFTER THAT THE DAWN 275

Why I dropped out of Court circles; a land that is no longer charted; English social life in Victorian and Edwardian days; a letter from Queen Victoria to Mr. Gladstone; extension of the Franchise; the "Flapper Vote"; our Poor Law a scandal; the climax of the Great War; much has changed for the better; Britain is alive and awake; Ramsay MacDonald and his assistants; the women behind the Cabinet; Labour must look forward; Sir Oswald Mosley; our lost markets; shopping and the banks; I remain an optimist; may the dawn of Socialism come soon!

L'ENVOI 286

INDEX 289

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE been asked to give the public a glimpse of the panorama of the last half century as I have seen it—its changes, its advances, its retrogressions, its character, as viewed by one who has herself undergone a change not unlike that which Great Britain has experienced.

In Victorian days nearly all upper-class England was Tory, not merely in political beliefs, but in its attitude towards life generally. I spent long years in comparatively thoughtless conservatism, enjoying the outwardly luxurious existence of the times. It was generally believed that all that was demanded of a woman was that she should be beautiful, a good hostess, and keep her mind innocent of disturbing thoughts; in reality, we were brought up in an atmosphere of duty that seems sadly lacking to-day. We took a personal interest in our tenants and our dependents, while our servants were part of the family, often born and bred on the estate, and in many cases were treated confidentially, almost as friends. This close link between mistress and maid is a thing of the past.

Since those days I have plunged deeply into politics, striving to break down the conditions that cause poverty and privation, chief of which I consider to be a lack of education. If people are to recognize fully how much has been achieved by those who broke through the old order of things, it is essential that they should be able to form an accurate mental picture

of the old times, before attempting to contrast them with the new. I am going to devote my afterthoughts to the old days, in the hope that the present generation will see, as I see, that conditions are far better for the great majority of people than ever they were before, and that we have made astounding progress.

To-day no surprise is shown if a man or woman of education has political leanings towards Labour. When first I became interested in the Labour movement, I was the centre of a battle ; the most charitable view expressed was that I had been so spoiled, and was so bored, that I had to find a new sensation.

Yet I was merely reverting to those youthful inclinations that had been eclipsed, temporarily, by the dazzling social world in which I found myself as a grown woman. Even in childhood I rebelled against many of the accepted conditions of life. I thought it wrong that the labourers on the estate should work so hard for so little reward. I thought it wrong that they should live in houses far less carefully planned than our stables. As a child, I promised myself that some day I would struggle against these things. I am more thankful than words can express that I have been true to my resolve.

To-day I am hoping for things that may appear dull to many people—better housing, better education for the rural child, improved school buildings, the abolition of the Parish school in favour of a State-run Educational Institution, electrification of the countryside, a water supply that will enable the cottage dweller to keep his house, his family and himself in decent cleanliness—a state of affairs for which we cannot hope while thousands have to walk, as in my own village, a mile or more to get a pail of water from

the village pump. In common with many who have the interests of the country at heart, I am helping to fight that travesty of a law which enables County Councils to grant land to men who are eager to farm it, disregarding the fact that the Councils are composed mainly of landlords and farmers, who, as a rule, dispose only of such land as they themselves cannot use. We are struggling against the type of stupidity which has made it possible for these Councils to build rows of nice houses, with bathrooms and excellent sinks, yet omit to lay on the water !

We strive to combat unemployment by advocating laws which will prevent the country folk in their thousands from leaving for the cities ; this can only be done by satisfying them that, if they are unable to improve their own condition, that of their children will be bettered by an education such as they cannot obtain outside the cities.

I wonder how many people know that, although the factory worker is insured, and can claim insurance when he is out of work, the agricultural labourer is not protected in the same way ? If he loses his job, even through no fault of his own, he is left with his family to starve until they fall ill, when they can claim assistance on the grounds of sickness.

Is it surprising that the cities are being overcrowded at the expense of the countryside ?

I wonder how many town dwellers realize that the wages of a farm labourer amount to thirty shillings a week ? Out of this he must pay rent, feed and clothe his family. Butter and milk and eggs are not free to the country labourer, as many believe. The farmer is too poor to give anything away. Moreover, he is usually under contract to deliver a certain quantity

of milk daily to the dairies, and often has great difficulty in paying for sufficient food to keep his cattle in condition to carry out the contract. His own family often goes short of farm produce. How, then, can he give to his hired hands ?

The statistics of rickets, the disease caused by a want of fresh foodstuffs, prove conclusively that children who have the misfortune to be born in the heart of the healthiest and most beautiful countryside rarely get a sufficiency of wholesome food. Though almost wiped out nowadays in the cities, this disease is common in the country, in the food producing districts. In addition, the number of mental defectives is proportionately larger in the country than in the towns—a state of affairs definitely traceable to the country child's under-nourished condition.

I have never kept a diary, and the records to which I might have turned, for very much more than appears in these pages, have passed beyond recall. I have been compelled to move, so to speak, from place to place. A photograph, a chance conversation, an incident in town or country, may have brought back a memory of the past, and of those who peopled it, and I have put it on paper.

These memories go back over half a century of a very full life, and when that life began to have some significance there was no thought of making records. Thus I have been compelled to glean my scanty harvest from neglected and forgotten fields.

Doubtless, by the time this is published, I shall have remembered, too late, many another story that would have been worth setting down.

FRANCES EVELYN WARWICK.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

CHAPTER ONE

THE VICTORIAN ERA AS A BACKGROUND

Girlish impressions of the Queen ; making Europe one huge family ; rigid control of the Prince of Wales ; a remarkable character study ; moulded by the Prince Consort ; a ruler of men and women ; his early life ; the Victorian sense of duty ; Lady Ely and Lady Churchill ; Baron Stockmar ; an "Ideal Constitution" for Great Britain ; rigid Court propriety ; Arts and Sciences ; a Labour Government ; our democratic Prince ; "Over there" ; King Edward as an ambassador ; Princess May ; a new type of foreign relations.

QUEEN VICTORIA was the first person to inspire me with Socialistic views, though at the time I did not recognize them as such. I did not realize how much power could be vested in a single human being until I came into actual contact with her. It struck me at once how wrong it was that any one person should be in a position to juggle with hundreds of thousands of human lives.

The Queen was not an easy person for the young to approach. Her own son could not discuss with her, even privately, his disapproval of any act of hers ; those who close their ears to the voice of youth close them to progress. But she was kindness itself to me, and wished me to become her daughter-in-law.

Queen Victoria might have managed an unchanging world very well ; but she could not adapt herself to change, nor could she see that family authority was weakening, even then. Her idea of making

Europe one huge family by marriage, was one of the most fallacious that ever entered a queenly head. As events have shown, she was courting disaster when she decided to send her daughter to reign over Germany, even though this marriage was a love match.

She did not approve of many of the actions of her son, as Prince of Wales, but she overlooked the fact that she herself left him no alternative. He was not allowed to take part in the affairs of the country, though by temperament he was obviously more interested in active affairs than in intellectual pursuits. His parents forced him into a wrong groove; he was a very useful square peg in a round hole. This fact is admitted in the excellent life of the Prince Consort by Frank B. Chancellor.

> "This excessive restriction on all sides was very irksome to the young Prince. He was not intellectually inclined, but he had continually to be studying from books; he was active, but he was allowed very little scope for his activities; he was naturally sociable, but he was debarred from intercourse with boys of his own age."

When first I met the Queen I did not appreciate all this, for I was a mere girl. But I did recognize that I had come into contact with one of autocratic mind, and something within me cried out against this right of domination. I shall always regret that I was not more mature, for undoubtedly she must have presented one of the most remarkable character studies in history.

Even to-day I do not think it is realized how completely the Queen, although temperamentally an autocrat, allowed her mind and her views to be moulded

by her Consort. Nor is it understood how strong a personality was possessed by Prince Albert. Instead of being the comparative nonentity of popular opinion, he was in truth a born ruler of men—and of women. There are very few in this country who know anything of his life before his marriage to Queen Victoria; but those who have studied his history must be led to the conclusion that he possessed unusual strength of purpose, even as a boy, and certainly unusual rigidity. He was brought up in the licentious atmosphere of a court where self-indulgence, intrigue and pleasure were the only things that counted, yet we find him holding aloof, striving for his own moral uplift, performing deeds of charity, while telling his brothers on no account to mention these, since, in his opinion, "charity vaunteth not itself."

Undoubtedly he had an exceptionally high sense of duty, and it was his ambition that the world should be the better for his influence. It was this strong sense of duty that stands out as the chief characteristic of the Victorian era, and the world is not necessarily the better for its loss. But in spite of his reverence for science, and the stimulus he gave to scientific thought in this country, he was far from liberal-minded. His conviction was that the happiest conditions for the people were produced by an absolute monarchy.

In my early youth, when I was first at Court, there were several ladies who had been long enough in attendance on the Queen to recall the days of the Prince Consort and his confidential adviser Baron Stockmar. Lady Ely and Lady Churchill, two well-informed women, viewed events from an angle that found no expression in contemporary print; they believed that if the Prince Consort had lived a few

years longer there would have been direct conflict between the Throne and the People. This belief was founded upon close and intimate observation.

The fact that Queen Victoria strove so valiantly to make her husband King, instead of Prince Consort, lends support to this view.

The Queen cared only for the approval of her husband, and sought no other praise. " She is as full of love as Juliet," said Sir Robert Peel. Consequently Prince Albert was able to encourage her in her prolonged resistance to her ministers, in her preference for Lord Melbourne over Sir Robert Peel, for Lord John Russell over Lord Palmerston. It was his spirit that spoke through her in the later years, when she selected Lord Beaconsfield in preference to Mr. Gladstone, Lord Rosebery instead of Sir William Vernon Harcourt, Lord Salisbury in place of Sir Stafford Northcote.

Public opinion has not yet recognized the great influence of the Prince Consort in the friction that so often arose, after his death, between the Queen and her advisers, the Opposition, or public men of whose actions she disapproved.

It is not difficult to understand how Prince Albert gained such complete ascendancy over Queen Victoria, for his personality was forceful; to those for whom he cared, he was tender as well as courteous. His ideas were consistent and clearly defined, for in the shaping of his mind Baron Stockmar had brought to bear all his reactionary strength, backed by a cold and almost inhuman logic. Baron Stockmar was a harsh power in the land; besides being the Prince Consort's adviser, he supervised the education of the young Prince of Wales, and did much to make

his early years unhappy. I was told that he went so far as to draw up an " Ideal Constitution " for Great Britain, in which the power of the Crown was enhanced to an extent entirely out of harmony even in those conservative days.

We must remember that, in the days when the Prince Consort and Baron Stockmar were in close consultation, and the Queen was looking to the Prince as one who could make no mistakes, the Continent was given over entirely to systems of monarchy that were little less than absolute. It is not surprising that Prince Albert sought to gain greater power for the Throne, or that Queen Victoria, long after his death, continued to strive towards the goal at which her idealized husband had aimed.

Although he did not succeed in altering the British Constitution, Prince Albert certainly left his mark on the country.

His interests were extraordinarily wide, his ways of living simple, his will strong. The rigid propriety which Queen Victoria sought to introduce into Court circles was considered by many to have had its origin in her husband's views, rather than her own. This strictness was thought to be due to his contempt for the loose morals of the Court at Coburg. His mother, though the idol of the people, was rendered so unhappy by all this, that, without a struggle, she allowed herself to be divorced by her husband, and separated from her children.

Prince Albert was an active patron of the arts as well as the sciences. He lived in England scarcely more than twenty years—he was only forty when he died—but for nearly half his life he found time, in the midst of innumerable occupations, to superintend

the affairs of the Royal Philharmonic Society. It was he who introduced into this country the music of Wagner, Mendelssohn and Schumann. Only in the field of architecture did he pile one failure upon another. He is more or less responsible for the "Victorian residence," which must ever remain a reproach to his otherwise unblemished memory.

Fortified by her belief that this was in accord with her husband's wishes, Queen Victoria's innate desire to extend her rights aroused the heads of the great English families into watching that the Royal prerogative should not be exceeded.

Up to this time kingship still partook of the quality of Divinity. This seems impossible to-day, when we have had a Labour Government, with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald as chief adviser to the King.

Symptomatic of the change of feeling that has come over the whole country is the fact that the Prince of Wales and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald are friends. The new generation sees nothing incongruous in this. The democracy of the Prince is taken for granted, but I have watched four generations of the Royal family, and regard it with joy, not unmixed with wonder. It will be a very interesting thing to watch a practical democrat on the Throne.

The Prince has been in the trenches—the only heir to the Throne who has ever been in direct contact with the rough and tumble of men.

My son Guy, who died shortly after he succeeded my husband to the Earldom of Warwick, wrote me a letter on the subject, and I have treasured it.

> "I don't mind fighting, Mother, as you know," he wrote from G.H.Q. in France, "but I have

> to do far worse things here. The Prince insists on getting up at an unearthly hour every morning, and taking a long run, in order to keep fit. Of course, I have to go with him, and I don't know whether it is because he has noticed that my figure is not as slender as it used to be, but he will insist on running up a high hill every morning. I go panting after him, and if I pant too much, he laughs."

Here is another comment from my boy that comes back to me as I write.

> "E.P. is the best insurance agent against a Republic that Great Britain has ever had."

Obviously, "over there" the Prince became familiar with facts that were kept as carefully guarded secrets from preceding monarchs. His grandfather, King Edward, whose democratic tendencies were far in advance of Queen Victoria's era, was never given opportunity to learn the things that the Prince has insisted upon finding out.

Only a sincere democrat desires to know the uncomfortable things of life. In King Edward there was a perpetual struggle between his sense of duty and a desire to conceal from himself that all was not well with the best of all possible worlds. Queen Victoria did not lend a listening ear to recitals of the wrongs of the people; King Edward, on the other hand, did listen, but he would not seek to hear. Those who revealed unpleasant things were not liked the better for it.

In the case of the present Prince of Wales, I doubt whether there are many bearers of evil tidings; as a

rule, he has found out for himself first-hand, and therein lies a vast difference. His knowledge of conditions in every part of the world, his conversations with men and women in every circumstance of life, his understanding of business requirements and of trade disappointment, will ensure a sovereign wisdom for the years to come.

It is truly amazing, and speaks wonders for progress, when one recalls that the Prince is only three generations removed from Queen Victoria, who, if she had had her way, would have chosen to rule the country single-handed. It is a remarkable picture, this contrast between the Prince of Wales and the ultra-conservative Queen, who looked upon the people as her private possession, and whose ideal of government was a benevolent but rigid autocracy. Then came her son, who was crowned, unfortunately, when he was past the prime of life. The natural abilities of King Edward had been held in check too long to permit a rapid development when at length he came to the Throne. Following him, came our present King, who has devoted himself passionately to social service, working unceasingly, quietly and selflessly, for the internal welfare of the country.

Those of us who were eager to see Princess May marry into the Royal family foresaw that she would train her sons into practical lines of thought, as well as the ideal of a selfless devotion to the people. As a girl she was extraordinarily alive to the fact that Royalty was so shielded that it rarely had an opportunity to learn the essential things. As a young married woman, she showed the same passion for acquiring first-hand information. I was told that she would often go into the East End, incognito, with

the wife of a great surgeon who is still with us, visiting the sick and becoming aware of the practical nursing that was required. As the people did not know who she was, she saw the inside of the working man's home undecorated by bunting—a woman's way of going into the trenches.

The contrast between King George and King Edward is quite as interesting as that between King Edward and Queen Victoria. Our present sovereign has given himself to what I will call "inside work," whereas King Edward's chief interest lay in England's foreign relations. In the opinion of some well-informed people, King George's marked attention to matters within the Empire, rather than without, is in the nature of a reaction against Royal Ambassadors.

The Prince, however, has taken a course different again from that of either his father or his grandfather. He has learned from his own investigations that the main factor in the life of a nation is work. He has created a new type of "foreign relations," and has become an economic ambassador, helping the country to form business alliances, happy in the knowledge that peace with one country does not entail war with another.

This abandonment of wordy treaties, in favour of practical business developments in which the whole of the populace can share, is surely a great advance.

CHAPTER TWO

A POPULAR PRINCE OF WALES

The Kaiser and his uncle ; Prince of Wales's admiration for the German people ; the Entente Cordiale ; the Empress Frederick ; education for the masses ; the Tsar Alexander ; the King's journey to Reval ; a mixed Russian choir ; police strictness ; King Alfonso ; King Leopold of the Belgians ; Easton Lodge ; the King's interest in gardening ; Osborne House ; dislike of Court tittle-tattle ; Society nurses and the Boer war ; Queen Alexandra ; an ideal hostess ; Rose Day ; King Edward's devotion to duty ; as an impromptu speaker ; interest in animals ; his courage ; his visit to Paris ; Sir John Fisher ; Lord Haldane ; the Marquis de Soveral ; the reduction of shipbuilding ; Sir Ernest Cassel ; Mr. Asquith's visit to Biarritz ; King Edward's failing health ; religion and the hereafter ; Cardinal Manning ; the King's death.

It was easy to distinguish certain of Queen Victoria's singularities in her grandson, Wilhelm. Undoubtedly King Edward and the Kaiser were antagonistic, and I have often imagined that the King was irritated by finding in the Kaiser those same traits that had caused him humiliation at the hands of the old Queen.

The first time I saw the Kaiser was at a ball held at Buckingham Palace. Queen Victoria issued the invitations, but according to her custom after her husband's death, she was not present, so the Prince and Princess of Wales were host and hostess.

The supper room was a most impressive spectacle, for the gold plate was unique. It made the entire room appear as though it were of gold, and formed a striking set-off for the gorgeous fashions of the day.

The world-famed hock-cup was the great attraction for the men—it was too strong for most of the women.

The Prince often spoke German to me, but the

Kaiser spoke English, and it would have been an insult to address him in his native tongue. I remember him saying that he thought the two most beautiful women at Court were Georgiana, wife of the Earl of Dudley, and Lady Ormonde, daughter of the first Duke of Westminster.

Although, on the surface, the relations between uncle and nephew were smooth and friendly, they were irreconcilable even at that time. As host and guest, they were polite, but there was not one spark of spontaneity in their relations to one another. Each responded to the demands of etiquette, but there was nothing more than that.

I feel certain to-day that, if it had not been for that peculiar attitude found only in blood relations, King Edward would never have bound his country to the Entente Cordiale.

Actually, he admired the German people profoundly. He once told me that he thought it would be a good thing if our people would learn organization as the Germans understood it.

Nobody has more reverence or affection for King Edward's memory than I have, but this does not prevent my seeing that any man, even a great man, may be led astray by his personal friendships and enmities. Both the Kaiser and the King lost sight of their people in their desire to show each other their power, and the extent of their antipathies.

I know that the Entente Cordiale will go down in history as King Edward's master-stroke, but, stripped of its golden phraseology, I regarded it then, as I do now, as his one blunder.

I remember when he first told me that the Entente was being discussed.

" Why an Entente ? " I asked. " Surely if the hour should strike when England feels that France is being wronged, there would be time enough to go to war as her ally ? Why commit thousands and thousands of people, who have nothing against Germany, to avenge France for Alsace-Lorraine ? "

I experienced a momentary fear of such events taking place as those that actually occurred in 1914. I think I realized, in common with others who had been behind the scenes, that one of the factors preserving international peace was a feeling of uncertainty in all countries as to what England would do in the event of war. This uncertainty would now be gone.

" I do not believe there will be a world war," I said, " but if France and Germany should ever come to fight—and that is not altogether impossible—you are pledging millions of working men to battle who have nothing to gain by victory."

The King changed the subject, and I realized that nothing would sway him. The unparalleled reception organized by the French diplomatic powers for their first official visit came to my mind. Paris went mad with joy—as if by order. The Quai d'Orsay had succeeded !

In spite of everything, King Edward endeavoured to reach an understanding with Germany. I believe that he enlisted the services of the Empress Frederick, mother of the Kaiser, for that purpose.

The Empress was equally concerned with dynastic interests, but differed from her mother, Queen Victoria, in being more accessible to social development ; she was more democratic, and did not share her august parent's belief that education for the masses was undesirable.

The enormous development of learning in Germany was stimulated by her. Wilhelm recognized the direction of his mother's sympathies, and resented her tutelage in that which concerned England. I think it was the feeling that, if he consented to take English views, he might lessen his own Royal status, of which he was so immoderately proud, that made so difficult the path of pleasant association between uncle and nephew. Again and again the King's attempts to come to an understanding seemed to be frustrated ; he mistrusted his nephew even more than he disliked him.

One of King Edward's unswerving loyal affections was for Alexander III, his brother-in-law, father of the Tsar Nicholas. When the young Tsar invited King Edward to visit him at St. Petersburg, in the early summer of 1908, the King's desire was to accept. The fact that the police could not guarantee his safety meant nothing to him, for he was naturally brave.

Two factors, however, caused the King to decide against going : the anxiety that would be felt at home in the circumstances, and his realization of the grave complications that would inevitably follow any catastrophe that might befall him in the Russian capital.

At the same time, it would be affectation to minimize the opposition raised by the English Socialist party. One and all the leaders were bitterly hostile to relations between their constitutional King and an autocrat of the Nicholas type. They made it impossible for Tsar Nicholas to come to England, and they manœuvred to alter the Royal itinerary, diverting it from the Russian capital to Reval.

It went against the grain to give up his plan, but King Edward arranged to meet the Tsar and Tsarina at the seaport of Reval, whither he travelled in the Royal yacht, taking with him the chiefs of his Navy and his Army, Sir John Fisher and Sir John French.

I recall one rather striking incident that was mentioned in connexion with this visit. A steamer was brought within a few yards of the yacht, and a mixed choir on board sang Russian songs. One of the King's personal staff asked the chief of the Russian police whether it was safe to have all those people within such close range, when nothing was known about them. The reply was reassuring, albeit somewhat startling.

" Do not be troubled by any doubts," said the Police chief. " They were all stripped and searched before they were admitted to the steamer."

A light shines suddenly upon the methods of the Muscovites whose duty it was to guard Royalty.

King Alfonso also invited the King to his capital, and if the Royal inclination had been followed, he would have visited Madrid. The British Cabinet, however, realized that there might be grave danger in this visit, so King Edward again relinquished his own wishes and met King Alfonso elsewhere.

King Leopold of the Belgians was the only European monarch whom he disliked thoroughly. Leopold lived his life so openly and with so little shame, that when he came to Queen Victoria's funeral he brought a mistress with him. He was never allowed to come to England again, and the Royal comment on his behaviour was too caustic for repetition.

As Prince of Wales, King Edward was very fond of

Easton, especially of the grounds. He had a splendid eye for landscape gardening, and it is not generally known, I think, that the revival of interest in gardens was due, in great measure, to his influence. The grounds at Sandringham, which he planned himself, bear witness to his taste in this direction. History has still to do justice to his discernment, and his appreciation of the beautiful, as well as to his extraordinary courage and high sense of duty.

He rarely referred to his relations with his family, but I remember one occasion when, quite by chance, he allowed me to glimpse his feelings, saying that he was devoted to Sandringham, drawn to Balmoral, compelled to live in Buckingham Palace, but that Osborne House was a white elephant.

" Frankly," said the King, " I have finished with Osborne House. As a private residence, it is utterly unattractive to me. Besides, not one of us is really well there.

" My sisters are trying hard to persuade me to retain it," he added, " because of old associations. But personally I should always think of it as a house in which one I loved had died."

This was one of King Edward's rare references to his affection for Queen Victoria, an affection which had never died, despite the somewhat unpropitious atmosphere in which it flourished.

When Prince of Wales he used to spend many week-ends with us. Sometimes he would desire a brilliant gathering, and in that case I would submit a list of people, or he himself would propose the guests. At other times, he would say that he wanted quiet ; then he would find a family party. He was very fond of my children, especially Guy. He liked my husband's

repose of temperament, while they shared a great liking for sport, which drew them close together.

He knew that in me he had an audience keenly appreciative, and vitally interested in all that was going on in the world. Many of the Prince's friends made the mistake of thinking that the tittle-tattle of the Court would interest him, whereas he was often bored by its small intrigues and internal " politics," and wished for some intimate contact with the affairs of the greater world outside.

His mordant criticism of some of the silly society women who went out to South Africa in the Boer war, ostensibly to nurse the wounded, but actually to have as good a time as they could, was rather cruel.

" I am told," he remarked, " that they walk about the streets of Cape Town dressed as though they were at Ascot or Monte Carlo. One would suppose that, if they were not prevented by a sense of fitness of things, at least they would be deterred by a sense of humour."

I wish I could remember all the things the Prince said, strolling along the paths at Easton. Every now and then he would stop and interrupt himself abruptly, in order to comment upon some plant or flower.

Queen Alexandra, in her younger years, was full of fun and the joy of life. She enjoyed entertaining and being entertained, while beneath her placid exterior there was a shrewd judgment that expressed itself now and again in no uncertain terms.

As hostess, Queen Alexandra stood alone, and the amazing thing is that her deafness could no more affect her charm than time could dull her beauty. She remained to the end stately, kindly, full of love

and sympathy, deeply affected and always delighted by her own popularity. Rose Day gave her the last great interest in life.

In all his preferences and matters of opinion, King Edward was very human. His greatness lay in an extraordinary devotion to duty. No matter where he might be, he would not only be ready but eager to deal with affairs of the day, at whatever sacrifice of amusement or leisure. So curiously constituted was his mind that he could turn from some great problem of European politics in order to consider the buttons and tabs on a regimental uniform, expressing a decided preference for this or that, with a gravity that seemed quite out of proportion to the matter in hand.

He loved both the great things of life and the small, and had little concern with those people who were not vitally interested in either.

The King was an impromptu speaker of parts, and the reason why he practised the art was because he could not memorize a written speech. He had tried more than once, but failed, and taking this lesson to heart, he taught himself to make a speech at a moment's notice, and would remark that he never thought of what he was going to say until he was on his feet.

He possessed the ability to forget his audience while remembering his subject, and the special aspect of it that he desired to present.

A light is thrown on his character by the fact that, in spite of the many vital and pressing affairs of State that heavily taxed his physical energy and intellectual power, he found time to play the part of an active opponent to the traffic in old horses, and exerted himself for its suppression. Here the King was following in his mother's footsteps. Few people know that

Queen Victoria was the first English ruler to demand improvement of the way in which animals were driven to markets and slaughtered.

The King's courage was of several kinds. There was the physical courage that left him undaunted when the Belgian desperado, Sipido, fired point-blank at him. There was the moral courage that he showed after Dom Carlos of Portugal had been assassinated. Not only was there a service at St. Paul's, but there was a Requiem Mass at St. James's Church, in Spanish Place, which the King himself attended, amid the loud protests of the intolerant. By going to Paris, shortly after his coronation, at a time when the Parisians greeted him with cries of " Long live the Boers ! " and " Fashoda ! " he defied the urgent recommendations of the Foreign Office and also of the French Embassy. He was warned that his reception would be a bad one.

" What does it matter ! " he remarked. " Anglo-French relations are in a shocking state, and I seek to improve them. Things cannot be worse, and if I fail, the only person to suffer will be myself. I am going."

He went, and his personal magnetism paved the way for the Entente Cordiale.

It is no small thing for a man who has been brought up to receive the acclamation of nations, to go to the capital he likes best, with the certain knowledge that he will have a hostile reception, and that only his own personal efforts can change it into something better.

The doubts and protests of his Ministers must have made it doubly trying, for failure would have been very bitter in such circumstances.

In the last few years of his life, King Edward placed

great reliance on two men, Sir John Fisher and Lord Haldane. Among diplomats, his favourite was the Portuguese Ambassador, the Marquis de Soveral. He was one of the King's closest friends, and was always with him on the Royal yacht. He was also a great favourite with Queen Alexandra. How well he justified his sobriquet, " Blue Monkey," for he was the ugliest and certainly the most fascinating member of the diplomatic corps. What perfect manner—what *risqué* stories !

The King was behind Sir John Fisher in supporting what was called the Fisher Programme of 1904–5, to which the German Naval Bill of 1906 was the reply. In later years, the last of his brief reign, he made strenuous efforts to come to a private arrangement with Germany for the sane reduction of shipbuilding. The agent in this matter was his great friend, Sir Ernest Cassel. On the German side, the shipping magnate, Herr Ballin, spoke, so far as anyone could, for the German Government. Negotiations broke down, and their failure distressed King Edward deeply.

The King was brave to the last. I remember the outcry in several leading newspapers when Mr. Asquith, afterwards Lord Oxford, became Prime Minister, and had to go to Biarritz to kiss hands on appointment. Great newspapers suggested that the King was wasting the time of his Prime Minister in order that he might not lose a little of the sunshine he was supposed to be enjoying. Actually the King's health at that time was so bad that the journey back to England could only have been undertaken at a risk that the doctors would not permit.

King Edward realized that enormous political possibilities were associated with his interview with

the Tsar at Reval, so he forbade the issue of any bulletins, and allowed the reason for sending for his Prime Minister to remain obscure. Rather than jeopardize the plans that he thought might be for the good of the country, he allowed himself to be misjudged by those who did not grasp the inner significance of his actions, and had not the means of gaining accurate information.

In the closing years of his life he was a sick man. He knew full well that his health could not improve, and it was characteristic of him that he should have been anxious to abdicate. This suggestion was not made in order that he might seek the ease and leisure that would have prolonged his life, but because he doubted whether he could now solve successfully the many problems with which he was confronted.

After his last visit to Paris he said, " All the glamour has gone. I do not mind if I never cross the Channel again ! "

With diminishing strength and vitality, he felt that the day's work was becoming impossible. But so soon as he had been persuaded, by his most intimate friends and advisers, that he should not abdicate, he went to the other extreme. He denied himself the little leisure he might reasonably have enjoyed, which might have kept him in better health. Against the doctor's advice, he smoked cigars incessantly. He ate what he pleased, but he was always very temperate in the use of alcohol.

The new spirit that had risen in politics puzzled and distressed him. It was with the greatest effort that he remained on polite terms with Mr. Lloyd George, whose truculent speeches astonished as much as they offended him. More than once he sent

rebukes to members of the Liberal Government who had involved him in their quarrel with the House of Lords, taking it for granted that he would side with the peers against the people. His great desire was to see justice done to all sections of the community, and this caused him to refuse to identify himself with either party of the State.

I do not think that King Edward was seriously affected by the ritual of religion, and I never heard him discuss the hereafter. But he had respect for the opinions of all men, and, as head of the Church of England, he always remembered the Sabbath Day. At Easton, where he was a frequent week-end visitor, as at Sandringham, he went to church with unfailing regularity every Sunday morning, without regard to the weather. Nothing would have kept him from our delightful little church in the Park, where generations of the Maynards lie at rest.

He would invite great preachers to Sandringham—though he limited sermons to fifteen minutes. If he thought the preacher was exceeding the limit, he would refer to his watch with some approach to ostentation.

There was one churchman for whom King Edward, in common with all society, had a respect that was akin to reverence. This was Cardinal Manning. No cleric of my day imposed his personality upon the people of this country in equal degree. He was as great in his way as Pope Leo XIII. He had the face of an ascetic, with the eyes of a kindly saint, eyes that had an uncomfortable habit of looking into your heart. He had conquered all desire ; his principles were fixed and rigid. He was incapable of deceiving himself, or of deceiving others.

It was at my brother-in-law's house that I met King

Edward for the last time. It was a sad interview, for I was shocked at the change in the King. Usually we would talk of current events, but on this occasion his mind seemed filled with thoughts of the past, and many of his sentences were prefaced with " Do you remember."

It was only when we had said good-bye that the thought flashed through my mind that those who are about to die have visions of the past. I dismissed these disquieting thoughts, but they recurred insistently.

Alas, as I feared, the King was fighting a losing battle !

It was characteristic of him that, at a time when the whole world was gravely concerned for his personal safety, he wrote to me from Biarritz, discussing very fully the ill-health of my brother-in-law, the Duke of Sutherland, questioning the wisdom of the doctor's decision to send the Duke to Mentone. His own state of health was dismissed in one brief sentence.

When he passed Beyond, a wise brain and guiding hand were lost to England, as well as to Chancelleries and States. There were many leaders of men who trusted him, and who were prepared to turn to him in any time of crisis.

When, on Friday, May 6th, 1910, having given the day to work, he died in his chair, his voice had become paramount in Europe.

His last words were his most fitting epitaph : " I shall work to the end."

CHAPTER THREE

THE THRONE AND DEMOCRACY

The strain of Government ; " Life and Letters of Queen Victoria " ; King Edward as a monarch ; the great families of Britain ; Lord Salisbury on the " Hotel Cecil " ; the Royal prerogative ; the power of the Exchequer to-day ; Domestic politics or Foreign affairs ; a ragging in the Guards ; marriage of Princess Ena of Battenberg ; the Coronation Oath ; my revolt against tradition ; the unpardonable sin ; the Liberal peers ; Lord Esher ; Sir Francis Knollys ; Lord Salisbury ; Lord Balfour ; Lord Lansdowne ; Mr. Asquith ; Lord Rosebery ; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman ; the King's love of amusement ; Sir Walter Parratt ; classical music and the Opera ; Melton Prior.

I WONDER if the general public fully realize the strain and friction associated with government ? I have always held that no member of any Cabinet who does his duty need be envied. Worry and anxiety must be his portion from the time he takes office to the time he returns the seals ; while in many departments of State he will have nothing to show for his labours. Those who rule are equally exposed to strain and anxiety, but their difficulties are unknown outside official circles of the more exclusive kind.

I was glancing recently at the " Life and Letters of Queen Victoria," that volume of the series which brings the fascinating story of progress in the face of unimaginative conservatism down to the year 1890.

These letters have been edited with more than ordinary care and skill. They are published under authority, consequently we may be sure that they are very far from being complete, though they are representative.

It is impossible to read more than a few pages without realizing that there was always some measure of friction between the Queen and her advisers, or the Queen and the Opposition, or with the men of whose actions she disapproved. Difficult though she might be at times, Queen Victoria could always command the respect as well as the fear of her Ministers, while she claimed and received in addition the homage due to her sex. She took the cleverest advantage of her position to advance her views.

King Edward was a far more constitutional monarch than his mother.

The heads of the great houses like those of Cecil, Cavendish, Percy, Stanley, and a dozen others, were born with the belief that they had the prescriptive right to rule the country, as they ruled their estates. England was their domain, in a sense, and if they administered it with integrity of purpose, nothing more was required of them. It was understood that this integrity was not affected by the appointment of their own relatives to important positions—an understanding which was fully accepted by Lord Salisbury, who never forgave Labouchere his famous witticism, when he referred to Downing Street as the "Hotel Cecil."

Nobody could say that the Prime Minister ever gave a post to a relative who was not a capable man, still the fact remains that he did put a number of Cecils into Government jobs.

It is easy to understand how the belief grew among the heads of the great houses that the Royal prerogative must be kept in check. Since the first Cecil held office, the direct Royal line had changed more than once.

Down to the time of the War, there were houses whose heads regarded themselves as second to none in the kingdom, though they revelled in going through all the forms and ceremonies of homage to their sovereign. How they guarded their traditional rights to certain exclusive Court service; not an iota of ceremonial fealty would they surrender!

If we look a little further, and consider the rise of Democracy in 1905, it is not difficult to understand the antagonisms that prevailed. Royalty and the great ruling houses watching each other, while both were faced with the apparition of the working man become clamant.

The struggles between the Crown and the noble landowners no longer claim serious attention. The ruling classes of forty years ago are threatened with extinction. In olden days, kings cut off the heads of peers who became too powerful; to-day the Exchequer cuts off their revenues, a procedure that is far more effective, since it makes the heirs harmless.

When you rule in half a dozen counties, when your reception-rooms are the centres of political intrigue, and when you have the power of sending men to Parliament—or at least of influencing votes on a large scale—it is impossible that you should be ignored, particularly if you add to your influence the claims that attach to high descent and traditional authority.

But if your resources are taxed almost to extinction, if the particular House of Parliament in which you sit has ceased to have any more influence than that which attaches to a well-conducted debating society, you are hardly in a position to attack the prerogatives

of the Crown, or even to resist an extension of these prerogatives.

It is from the House of Commons that change will come, and so odd is the sequence of events, that if the Commons decide to-morrow that Royalty had usurped prerogatives belonging to Parliament, the defence of Royalty would come from the Upper House, whence, in former times, any encroachment would have been resisted most strenuously. The peers would prefer to side with Royalty rather than with the people; they would co-operate against that common enemy, Democracy. But of one matter in this connexion I am certain—if the forces of Labour were routed, and a long period of Conservative rule were inflicted upon us, there would be the same petty difficulties, the same insignificant questions, the same resistance that prevailed when King Edward first came to the Throne and found that men like Lord Salisbury and Lord Lansdowne were watching him with jealous eyes. They were not concerned so much with Democracy as for their own Estate.

The signs of the times are easily overlooked, but there should be placed on record the recent appointment of Mr. Justice Isaacs as Governor-General, as made by the Government of Australia without reference to London. This may be regarded merely as a breach of etiquette by a young country, but for those who follow the struggle of the Crown to maintain its dignities in the face of change, that action has an extraordinary significance.

King Edward was immensely interested in questions of precedence; the Royal prerogative had in him such an ardent defender that he would feel distressed if anything, however small, appeared to trespass upon

it. Every one of his Ministers was required to appreciate the full measure of the Royal rights; failure in this met with sharp rebuke.

"I am not concerned for myself," he remarked once, "but for those who come after me. The modern tendency to cut down the Royal prerogative in all directions must be resisted sternly."

He was not greatly interested in domestic politics, but could and did concentrate upon them when necessity arose. Foreign affairs attracted him far more, because they gave him the large scope that he loved. Apart from that, he was particularly interested in the Services, especially in the Army. I remember that there arose what was known as a ragging case in the Guards, a year or two before he died; he made considerable personal effort to stop publicity, because he thought it might bring the Service into disrepute.

The marriage of King Alfonso of Spain and Princess Ena of Battenberg gave rise to one of the most curious of those outbreaks of intolerance that occur from time to time in this country. It was necessary that the Princess should embrace her husband's religion, and she did so, to the intense anger of all manner of bodies that take upon themselves the duty of protecting Protestantism. Sermons were preached, petitions were signed, prophecies were uttered, and the King urged to veto the marriage. I remember his outspoken impatience with this intolerance.

"In the first place," he said to me, "the people who are making this trouble forget that the Princess's father was not English. Secondly, they seek to stir up strife. How can Europe hope to make progress

towards understanding, if we are prepared at any moment to revive these old disputes ? "

King Edward's feelings on the subject of intolerance were very marked.

" For myself, I have taken the strongest exception to the terms of the Coronation Oath," he said. " I think that they inflict unnecessary pain on those of my subjects who are devout Roman Catholics. I hope that my successor will be relieved from the necessity of using words that have lost their justification."

He did not succeed in this endeavour ; the Bill to amend the Coronation Oath did not become law until three months after his death, so King George took the oath in the old terms. But his successor will find these objections removed, and this change for the better is due entirely to King Edward's plain speaking and steady effort.

It is remarkable that, both as Prince of Wales and after he came to the Throne, he should have shown me so much sympathy and understanding, more especially as his was a cautious nature. But even the example that he set in broad-mindedness failed to influence some of the more rigid-minded of the Court circle. They felt that they had fulfilled their public duties if they were willing to join in a party to go to the slums, to take a ticket for a ball in aid of a hostel, or to do some other equally ineffectual thing. The effects of poverty were apparent to them, not the causes.

If I were asked whether my revolt against tradition, authority and convention had accomplished anything, I should be tempted to declare that at least it had made people think. The price that I paid is a story

that can never be told in full, for I have no wish to hurt the living, or to traduce the memory of the dead.

In the hey-day of my youth, I had been extravagant and foolish enough, though not more so than my contemporaries. There is something fantastic in the reflection that it was not for these things that I was rebuked, but for becoming a serious, sober-minded member of society ! Having been surrounded by wealth and beauty since my birth, I had chosen deliberately to abandon these. It was this choice that constituted the unpardonable sin.

King Edward refused at first to take my ideas seriously, but eventually he realized that my interests had become more civic than social. In spite of the turmoil I had created, he continued to the end of his life to meet me for an occasional talk at the house of my brother-in-law, Sidney Greville, who had been so long and so faithfully attached to the Court, or at the home of my mother, the Dowager Lady Rosslyn.

King Edward may not have agreed with all my ideas, but he realized that I was following the dictates of my conscience, so he thought it would be wrong to attempt to influence me. It is the fact that he did not adopt society's attitude that has so endeared his memory to me.

It may have been that he realized more clearly than most men the difficulties that beset those that are politically minded. These difficulties are not stressed in any of the books that have been written about the late King, but I doubt whether these works were compiled for the purpose of telling the whole truth. Some are the work of men who were courtiers, others by people who sought to appear as though they were. Though I am not referred to in any of these

books, I can claim, without immodesty, through my friendship with King Edward when Prince of Wales, to know more about the conditions of the English Court than any of his biographers.

The Liberal peers, remnants of the old Whig party, never uncritical of kingship, were little more prepared than their antagonists to admit that the Prince would become a safe, sound and responsible monarch.

Is it because Liberals are afraid that their politics may cause them, as individuals, to be misunderstood, and that they fear the public might think that they wish to destroy the old moral standard, that Liberal politics so seldom seems to lead to liberal thought? As a class, Liberal peers are not only terribly respectable, but atrociously dull. Therefore it is comprehensible that they should have ranged themselves on the side of the Conservatives in their view of the bonhomie of the Prince.

King Edward had the wisdom to avail himself of Lord Esher's vast experience and knowledge, but even before this he had enjoyed the advantage of association with that honest man, good fellow, and model private secretary, Sir Francis Knollys, who was a Liberal in politics, and also in everything else. Whatever feeling for democracy there was in King Edward was implanted there in the first instance by Knollys.

Sir Francis had many assets that were helpful to the King. He knew all that there was to know about the rather stilted and difficult society—so different from the Marlborough House Set—that the King was now called upon to lead. He was also able to place at King Edward's disposal a very intimate knowledge of politics, having been trained in the traditions of the elder statesmen.

The King's outlook agreed with that of Sir Francis, because it was from the Liberals that the King had received the greatest measure of courtesy while he was Prince of Wales. Lord Salisbury might stand aloof and shut him out from inside knowledge of events, but Mr. Gladstone would never omit to keep him informed. So it befell that the Prince had a very definite sense of gratitude towards Mr. Gladstone, while he failed to appreciate Lord Salisbury's attitude. He recognized that his lordship's attitude may have been strictly correct, but there was a quality in it that was humiliating to him.

The Marquess of Salisbury was in office when King Edward came to the Throne. The Premier was then in declining years and failing health, and the burden of office was almost more than he could bear. He could see no occasion for geniality, and was too old to dismiss the fears that had assailed him for years. The accession to the Throne changed the formal relations between the two men, but there was very little alteration in the feeling that had existed for so long. Nor was there much warmth between the King and Mr. Arthur Balfour. Balfour stood aloof, unbending, and he was not free from the sin of intellectual pride; perhaps he was not able to appreciate the bonhomie of King Edward. Certainly he made little effort to adapt himself to the point of view of his sovereign.

The King did not find it easy, in dealing with foreign affairs, to bear with the position taken by Lord Lansdowne. Perhaps because he belonged to a house that was more closely associated with Liberalism than Conservatism, the Marquess had an innate dread of Royal interference, and was prepared to resist such a thing before it was encountered. I

think it is fair to say that Lord Salisbury, Lord Lansdowne, and Mr. Balfour were equally fearful of an attempt by the King to extend the Royal prerogative at the expense of Parliament.

It is well to remember that the struggle for precedence and prerogative between the Throne and the Cabinet remains unending.

In matters of foreign affairs, Lord Lansdowne held singularly narrow views, great statesman and ardent patriot though he was. He regarded the whole domain of the Foreign Office as his private property, and the King somewhat as a poacher.

King Edward realized that he had a flair for diplomacy; he resented this attitude, and remained fully determined to take foreign affairs into his own hands, as his mother had done before him. I do not think it has ever been made known to the public that Lord Lansdowne viewed with disfavour the visit to Paris on which the Entente Cordiale was founded.

There is a surprising amount of pride, prejudice, and pettiness in the political world, and there were many men in governing circles who would have preferred to fail rather than win success through their King's flair for handling measures and men.

Although the Whigs, and later the Liberals, were critical in their view of their sovereigns, it was the Conservative Cabinets that were the most consistently opposed to the monarch's intervention in the affairs of their country. They have always regarded these affairs as being matters for the exclusive consideration of the King's Ministers.

Naturally, disagreements between King Edward and his advisers did not come to light in his day, and they are not yet known to the public; but when

the official correspondence is published—as will be the case in these days when democracy insists upon learning facts—people will read more of these matters.

King Edward found few points to appeal to him in Mr. Asquith, who was Prime Minister during his Majesty's latter years. He was honest, able, conscientious and intellectual, but he had very little good-fellowship, and this, within limits, was what King Edward looked for, and to which he responded. He had no use for austerity.

I think, personally, that he never forgave Mr. Asquith for a certain ill-timed and ill-considered visit to the South of France, when, in King Edward's opinion, he should have been in Downing Street. The King discussed the subject with me, and as I chanced to know of a strong reason for Mr. Asquith's departure, I endeavoured to explain the situation. My explanation, however, was cut short by an incisive sentence from the King.

"My Prime Minister's place is in London."

If Lord Rosebery had been younger, he might have made an ideal Prime Minister, or Minister of Foreign Affairs, in King Edward's reign, because they spoke the same language, shared the same interests, and both were men of the world. But the Liberal camp then, as now, was full of the jealousies and backbitings that seem to thrive luxuriantly on Liberal soil, and consequently there was no place for Lord Rosebery as adviser to the King.

The only one of his Prime Ministers who appealed personally to the King was, I think, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, whose knowledge of men and affairs was second only to that of his sovereign, and

whose outlook was a mixture of shrewdness, caution and kindliness, touched with humour.

The King dearly loved a joke. Indeed, the man or woman who could keep him amused or interested was sure of ready welcome. I think that his love of amusement was due to the fact that he was singularly devoid of resources within himself. He had no love of his own company, and relied upon that of his friends. He had never been encouraged to indulge in hobbies ; even music held only a limited appeal for him, and, with certain exceptions, he was frankly intolerant of the classical variety. Sir Walter Parratt held the office of " Master of the King's Musick," and tried with disastrous results to arrange classical programmes. The only effect of his laudable ambition was to bring the concert to an untimely end. The King's retort to the attempt to introduce more serious musical compositions at the State concerts was to have a performance by Sousa and his band. Grand Opera was the limit of the Royal excursions into the world of music that matters, though oddly enough this included Wagner.

Kingship is a very arduous profession. It tied King Edward to his desk for many hours of the day, and the result was that he wanted the nervous and mental rest that is only found in contrast. This explains his demand for a variety of amusements, the society of those who could make him laugh, or, at least, play a good game of bridge.

There can be no doubt that his choice of friends created a measure of resentment. This arose from the fact that many of those who felt they had the prescriptive right to his friendship were socially uninteresting. King Edward was better equipped

with tact than with patience, and there were no sinecures in the little world made up of those who devoted themselves to his personal service.

So long as a British ruler appears to do the right thing, at the right time, and shows interest in the well-being of his subjects, he is secure. The old aloofness of Victorian times is gone.

No sovereign who isolated himself at Windsor or Balmoral, as did Queen Victoria, could realize the affection of the people as can one who enters into public life as does King George—and as the Prince of Wales shows every intention of doing, with a fullness and freedom which could not possibly have won the approval of Queen Victoria. I can almost imagine the unwritten letter from Her Majesty to our Prime Minister, beginning, " The Queen is greatly disturbed and vexed to find that the Prince of Wales has been to such and such a gathering, and she hopes," etc., etc.

I remember that King Edward would send for Melton Prior and listen to him by the hour. The celebrated war artist was a small man, whose head was so bald that, when he was making sketches during one fight—I have forgotten the particular campaign —they had to send him back from his prominent position, because the sun shone so brightly on his cranium that it drew the enemy's fire !

Melton Prior was a blue-eyed veteran, with Victorian whiskers. He had been through so many campaigns that he had stories to tell of fighting in every part of the world.

On one occasion when the King and the Kaiser were at Cowes, Mr. Prior was there for his paper. King Edward and his nephew were out walking one

morning, and the King acknowledged Melton Prior's salute.

" Who is that strange little man ? " asked the Kaiser.

" The celebrated war correspondent, Melton Prior."

" Psh ! " exclaimed the Kaiser, contemptuously. " A journalist ! "

The King was anxious to score off his nephew for this gratuitous rudeness, so he pretended to misunderstand.

" You would like to meet him ? " he said, graciously. " Certainly ! "

Before his august nephew could contradict him, he beckoned to Melton Prior to come forward.

" Mr. Prior," he said gravely, " the Kaiser has said that he would like me to present you to him."

King Edward added that the Kaiser concealed quite gracefully any resentment he may have felt.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MARLBOROUGH HOUSE SET

The pursuit of pleasure ; duty was a big word then ; the hurry and scurry of modern life ; no outlet for the Prince ; influence of the Press ; the middle classes and the tradesmen ; country-house entertainment ; Royalty for the week-end ; nerves and obesity ; Continental spas ; Homburg and Marienbad ; the glamour of Marlborough House ; the Jews ; artists, writers, musicians ; the Opera ; good mothers in those days ; Stone Hall ; my " Garden of Friendship " ; loyalty and devotion ; why I became a Socialist ; Robert Blatchford.

CONTRASTING my life of to-day with that of the period when I belonged to what was known as the " Marlborough House Set," I can scarcely realize that there was a time when I allowed myself to be a part of that glamorous circle which was so much discussed, so much envied, and so sadly overrated.

Outwardly it was a life of idle pleasure, and was condemned in consequence. This was only true in part, for duty was a big word in those days. We took a personal interest in our tenants, their families, and their affairs ; baskets of good things were sent to the expectant mother, and every household, from Duke to dustman, looked forward to a large family. Although there was plenty of gaiety of a sort, we obeyed our parents, respected our elders, and kept our promises, even our marriage vows. All this is lost to-day in the hurry and scurry of modern life, with its ceaseless craving for fresh, shallow excitement.

Even to-day, when it is too late, I resent the waste of time, the waste of energy, and most of all, the waste of brain-power that such an existence entailed. That

people like myself, with no real fetters, mentally and physically able, should have given ourselves over to that life of artificial gaiety, is to me unforgivable, in spite of our respect for that splendid word, duty.

Nor am I better able to understand why the vagaries of that small group of men and women should have been so eagerly followed in almost every paper. They fluttered in the sunlight of pomp and circumstance; in theory every man was an Adonis, every woman a Venus.

The Press helped to maintain this attitude among the people, but certainly it was not the only force at work. Every extravagance was held up to the public as a proper expenditure of money—it was good for trade! This strengthened the position of our circle, because it made us a privileged class. Our patronage was sought by tradesmen, eager to gratify our every caprice for the honour of serving us, while waiting indefinitely for our money. In those days, bills were presented yearly, sometimes triennially.

The middle classes were always led by the aristocracy, and a connexion with the so-called " right people " ensured, automatically, a connexion with others who were less " right " in themselves, but whose money was strangely like that of their more blue-blooded brethren. The amount of money we spent on our clothes seems fantastic to-day.

There can be little doubt that this encouraged an unyielding conservatism among the shopkeepers, and gave the trading community a horror of those whom the aristocracy abhorred—the wicked Radicals.

In London, during the season, the special achievement of the Marlborough House Set was to turn night into day. We would dine late and long, trifle

with the Opera for an hour or so, or watch the ballet at the Empire, then " go on " to as many houses as we could crowd in.

The extravagance involved in country-house entertainment was so considerable that some of Royalty's friends could not afford it. In certain houses of unlimited wealth, it had become customary to have a Royal suite specially refurnished on the occasion of each visit, in order that the note of novelty might be maintained. The chef who served for ordinary occasions would be replaced by a specialist, whose skill was equalled only by his wastefulness. This was typical of the manner in which everything was done.

I could tell stories of men and women who had to economize for a whole year, or, alternatively, get into debt, that they might entertain Royalty for one week-end! Added to the cost of entertaining the guests was the expense of caring for the cohorts of servants that their visit entailed.

Nerves, indigestion, sometimes plain obesity, due to too many meals and too little exercise, generally ended the season. Then the cure at a foreign spa became a necessity, and London society was compelled to visit such places as Homburg, Marienbad, or Wiesbaden.

In the years when King Edward, as Prince of Wales, used to go to Homburg, he was followed by society. He had his own table at Ritters Park Hotel, and I understand that his own special suite is still pointed out by the management to visitors.

Wonderful balls were given at Homburg for the Prince, some by the Duke of Cambridge, who shared his liking for the town. This was the old Commander-

in-Chief, who was reputed to have reviewed his troops, mounted on his charger and in Field-Marshal's uniform, but sheltering himself from the rain with an enormous umbrella.

The Prince made Homburg fashionable until he came to the Throne, when he transferred his patronage to Marienbad, because his beloved sister the Empress Frederick no longer lived outside the German spa.

Of course the Marlborough House Set had glamour ; indeed, glamour was its particular asset. It created the atmosphere which intrigued the public. I can feel something of the same sense of enchantment, in recalling it, that children experienced when they watched the transformation scene at the pantomime. For them, the girls in their spangles were beautiful fairies, and the scene a glimpse of fairyland. There lies, deep down in the heart of most of us, a desire for some things that we cannot attain, and because they are out of reach they become imbued with a delusive fascination.

We resented the introduction of the Jews into the social set of the Prince of Wales ; not because we disliked them individually, for some of them were charming as well as brilliant, but because they had brains and understood finance. As a class, we did not like brains. As for money, our only understanding of it lay in the spending, not in the making of it.

But society's prejudice was not limited to Jews ; it extended to artists, writers, musicians, lawyers.

We acknowledged that it was necessary that pictures should be painted, books written, the law administered ; we even acknowledged that there was a certain class whose job it might be to do these things. But we did not see why their achievements entitled them to

our recognition ; they might disturb, over-stimulate, or even bore. On rare occasions, if a book made a sufficient stir, we might read it, or better still, get somebody to tell us about it, and so save us the trouble. We responded to Opera, especially of the type which provided a stimulus for the emotions.

We considered that the heads of historic houses who read serious works, encouraged scientists, and the like, very, very dull, and they had only the scantiest contact with us. We wished to know as little of them as possible, and our wishes were our law.

We were good mothers in those days, but preferred to keep our children young, for the younger generation, we knew, would date us. Time was the one thing that we could not control, and consequently it had power to inspire us with fear. Many of the women who were my friends died when youth had left them —not of any particular disease, but of a lack of desire to go on living.

Far away in a corner of the park at Easton is Stone Hall, the remains of a monastic house built in the time of the Angevin kings, some authorities claim. Surrounding it is my " Garden of Friendship," in which those for whom I felt affection or esteem were asked to plant trees or shrubs. I can recall some of them now, especially my women friends, pacing the lawn with its yew-tree sundial, and looking eagerly to see how their trees or shrubs had grown, and what new ones had been planted, and by whom. These " Queens of the rosebud garden," as Tennyson phrased it, could not have endured change ; they could not have faced the waning of their power, that inevitable lessening of the ability to command pleasure to which Time dooms human beings.

I do not grieve for those who have passed on. Life could not exist to-day as they knew it, with the diminishing of incomes as well as the loss of youth, and they would have considered modern existence merely a living death.

Some of my best friends who have passed on were Lady March, Lady Mary Mills, Lady de Clifford, Lady Dalhousie, and the Duchess of Leinster. Their memory haunts my garden still.

The chief folly of those of us who belonged to the Marlborough House Set was to imagine that pleasure and happiness were identical. I cannot remember one friend of mine who was really happy, though each was always just going to be so. They had their hours of bliss—I recall many joys, both theirs and my own, but we were never able to cling to happiness.

What a man or woman might feel or do in private was their own affair, but our rule was No Scandal! Whenever there was a threat of impending trouble, pressure would be brought to bear, sometimes from the highest quarters, and almost always successfully. We realized that publicity would cause chattering tongues, and as we had no intention of changing our mode of living, we saw to it that five out of every six scandals never reached the outside world.

I mention these things only to show the conditions that made me turn my back on them. It is true that the Marlborough House Set seemed able to get exactly what it wanted. But it wanted the things that were unreal, hectic and ephemeral.

It was Robert Blatchford, that great Socialist and thinker, who opened my eyes, none too gently, and I saw that I was as he depicted me—a waster of substance and opportunity.

Things of which I had not thought since my childhood, but which were still in my mind, though dormant, came rushing back. I remembered that I had promised myself, before Easton came under my direct control, that I would strive against the injustices that I had seen. I remembered that I had pictured myself taking up the cudgels on behalf of the oppressed, struggling against the darkness that enveloped the working classes, seeking to do my best to help them to rise.

How had I kept that promise? By becoming a member of the Marlborough House Set! By giving myself up to the mental ease that no human being should enjoy while his brothers and sisters are suffering.

It seemed to me as though my social and civic conscience had been in a state of coma, and was just coming to—not a pleasant process. Yet I was glad, for I felt that I had escaped the danger of losing my soul.

I began to think; I looked around, and I determined to bring home to others the conditions which I saw—nay, which I still see. I have been the object of much bitter criticism, the target of many a barb. Nevertheless, in Socialism I have found the satisfaction denied me in the spacious days of the Edwardian era.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLITICAL HOSTESSES

The Treasury and the great estates ; the choice of guests when Royalty was present ; a rendezvous for men of all opinions ; influence upon their own sex ; petticoat influence ; the Duke of Devonshire and Joseph Chamberlain ; posts for relatives or friends ; who were the great hostesses of those days, political or social ? Queen Victoria and the old Duchess of Sutherland ; no " gate crashers " ; Theresa, Lady Londonderry ; Duchess of Buccleuch ; Lord and Lady Salisbury ; Monte Carlo ; gambling and pigeon shooting ; the ghastly horror of mutilated birds ; the Rothschilds ; Lady Granville ; Stafford House under my sister ; political receptions were a costly business ; wonderful masses of flowers ; Duke of Norfolk's Roman Catholic receptions ; a great Postmaster-General ; receptions or dances ; Marlborough House.

RIGHT down to the time of the Treasury's devastating attacks upon the great estates, the big families wielded enormous influence. They ruled in their own section of society.

I can tell a story, without mentioning names, of an August Personage who was going to visit an historic house in the country. According to custom, the list of guests was submitted to him for approval, and he added the name of a particular friend, a person whose standing was open to criticism among the elect. A letter couched in perfectly appropriate terms came by return from the hostess. She said that she did not know the August Personage's friend, whose name had been added to the list ; she asked at the same time that she might be relieved of the official position she held in the Royal household. The August Personage wrote back at once to say that he regretted the hostess

did not know his friend, that it was of no consequence, and that he hoped she would not resign.

From the time I married down to the era of the Great War, these hostesses were a dominant factor in English politics. They had vast resources, had been trained almost from birth in the art of entertaining, and were excellent judges of character. They provided, in town or country, a rendezvous where men of all shades of opinion—provided the shades were not too deep or too discordant—might meet to discuss the affairs of the session and the day. Their receptions were a rallying ground for the younger generation ; to be on their list for entertainment of any sort was to have a certain cachet, for their doors did not open to Tom, Dick, or Harry. Mere money provided no key to fit those carefully wrought locks.

They exercised their power largely through their pull over their own sex. A man might start his political career with every intention of being independent ; he might set out to annoy the Government, to embarrass Ministers, to give trouble of every sort and kind, in the fashion that a skilled parliamentarian can. But if he proved too difficult, there were many ways of bringing him to heel, and the most effective was by cutting him off from the social centre ! This might not matter to him, but it mattered terribly to his wife and daughters, who could be counted upon to bring domestic pressure to bear.

Hence the political hostess owed much of her influence to her hold on the wives of politicians, and the rest of it to her natural talents and capacity for diplomacy. She gave freely, and she took largely. Always ready to entertain on behalf of the party, she

would make her reception rooms the rendezvous of a thousand strivers. Her country house was the meeting-place of men who ridiculed or reviled each other in Parliament, yet were on the best of terms when the curtain fell upon the perennial farce. Because she knew everybody who was anybody, she was able to collect under her roof the most diverse interests, and there reconcile them.

Entertainment among the élite was undoubtedly an art. The enchantment lay in setting us at ease in a luxury that was exquisite, without thought of cost. Here, in an atmosphere of beauty, men and women reposed ; even statesmen lost their stateliness, and surrendered to delicate suggestion. Petticoat influence !

In those days, the personal columns of the Press were not concerned with any but the most ornate happenings. No gossip writer paused to inquire about the meetings of those who were privately friendly and publicly hostile. In writing of the years between 1880 and 1906, it can be said that matters of high importance to the State were constantly decided between Liberals and Conservatives in the country houses of England.

As time went on, it became necessary to extend the limits of social intercourse, for politicians of the more violent kind began to make a name for themselves. They found that doors hitherto barred were opening automatically. I remember the amazement at Chatsworth when the Duke of Devonshire (*plus royaliste que le roi*) announced at luncheon that he was expecting Mr. Joseph Chamberlain for the week-end. The Radical from Birmingham, one of the outer barbarians, to storm the ducal door ! I recall someone asking

me if I thought he would know how to conduct himself with outward decency. She prophesied gloomily that he would eat peas with his knife, since anything was possible to a demagogue. That evening Mr. Chamberlain must have reassured the doubting one. His calm appraisement of the company, his dignified appreciation of the atmosphere, established him immediately as someone with whom even great hostesses would have to reckon. I shall never forget it.

I rarely meet a young person to-day who does not think of Joseph Chamberlain as a dyed-in-the-wool Conservative. I am obliged to smile when I remember that the attitude of the Tories toward him was akin to that of a modern Conservative toward Lenin and Stalin.

It must not be supposed that the political hostesses were content to serve the State, at considerable expense, without return. They had friends or relations, while every Minister of standing had patronage to dispense, if only a parliamentary secretaryship. Thus it came about that many a woman's influence was able to secure place or preferment for somebody who, if left to his own devices, would have made less progress.

I think it was Lord Palmerston who said, in the outspoken way that was so offensive to his August Mistress, " I like the Order of the Garter, because there's no dam' merit about it."

For much the same reason, some of us liked the old-fashioned way of appointments to positions that were not too responsible. The real aim and purpose of the great hostesses was to maintain the *status quo*. They wanted to make things easy for both sides, so that while Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative,

wrangled across the floor of the House, there was always an opportunity for social intercourse between the acts. Thus they combined to protect themselves, as far as they could, against legislative changes which might militate against the interests of the class to which both belonged.

At this distance of time, when most of them have passed into the Silence, one may ask who were the great hostesses in the era of great entertainment ?

They could be divided into two classes, political and social. The great political hostesses were Theresa, Lady Londonderry, the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Lansdowne, the Marchioness of Salisbury, the Duchess of Buccleuch, and Lady Ellesmere, among the Conservatives and Unionists ; with Lady Spencer and Lady Fanny Marjoribanks, afterwards Lady Tweedmouth, among the Liberals.

On the social side, I think the most successful of all hostesses was my sister Millicent, Dowager Duchess of Sutherland, who maintained the splendid tradition of her husband's family at Stafford House.

" I have come from my house to your palace," Queen Victoria remarked to the old Duchess, on the rare occasion of a visit.

The difference between the old hospitality and the new is extraordinary. Every invitation was personal ; no hostess asked strangers to her house, or suffered their intrusion. There were no " gate crashers," because there was more self-restraint. In spite of invitations being restricted to friends and acquaintances, five hundred was no large figure for a political reception, which would start at nine o'clock in the evening and be over at midnight. Supper would be an affair of the buffet, but would be of irreproachable

quality. There were no sterner critics of champagne, *foie gras*, quail, and the rest of the familiar luxuries, than the people who attended receptions. The kümmel had to be of the same country as its concomitant—the caviare.

Few women could give both classes of reception, the political and the social. Theresa, Lady Londonderry, was one of these. She was an exception to the general rule of limitation, as indeed she was to most other rules. She was older than I, and though we were very friendly, we were never sufficiently intimate for me to see her unbend, though there must have been occasions when the softer side of her nature showed itself, or she would not have had so many admirers. Outwardly hard and unapproachable, she was yet the most wonderful hostess.

Lansdowne House was a favourite resort of the politicians and their followings. It had a wonderful setting, and Lady Lansdowne possessed a flair for entertainment. The Duchess of Buccleuch, at Montagu House, received only the most exclusive circle in London. Society for her consisted only of those upon whom she permitted herself to smile. The unfavoured were all of the outer darkness.

When Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister, a reception at the Foreign Office, with Lady Salisbury as hostess, was incomparably splendid, dazzling both to the eye and to the mind. It was certain that some of the Royal family would attend. Rajahs and Maharajahs, Ambassadors and foreign attachés in uniforms of infinite splendour, stalked god-like among the stately beauties of St. James's. Ablaze with jewels and the sashes of countless orders, they glowed with colour and complacency. I must confess that

some of us felt more than a flutter of petulance at our complete eclipse.

Nowadays some of this pageantry is disappearing, replaced by a sober repetition of white shirts and respectable black suits. Although Royalty always attended the Premier's Foreign Office party, they never went to political receptions.

I retain a most affectionate feeling for Lord and Lady Salisbury. Behind the Premier's gruff exterior beat a heart as big as his brain. His wife was the most motherly, and the worst dressed woman in society. Lord Salisbury himself was extremely careless in his dress. I do not think he knew what he was wearing, or what his wife wore. We used to see something of them in the South of France when they lived at " La Bastide," for their villa was not far from our own at Beaulieu. Lord Warwick and I sometimes stayed at the Cap Martin Hotel ; but this was for the sake of his health—the South of France never appealed to me. I was quite content with the English winter, particularly in my hunting days.

I hated Monte Carlo, for gambling never attracted me. The business of sitting down in a hot room in uncongenial company was repellent ; not even a run of luck could have atoned for it.

There was another thing that drove me from Monte Carlo, and that was the pigeon shooting. I remember the first morning when I sat at *déjeuner* in the Café de Paris, and heard a number of shots. I wondered what it was all about. Then, while I was still puzzled, I saw two birds, one with a broken wing and one with a broken leg, come painfully to rest on the green. That was enough ! I vowed that I would never go there again, and I have never done so. If only a

few others had been of my mind, the abominable business of the *tir aux pigeons* would have come to an end years ago. Many of my friends denounced it, but nobody would go to the length of making the practical protest of going elsewhere. I suppose there are " sportsmen " who would be quite ready to assure us that the pigeons like to be shot at and maimed.

In no spirit of criticism I have said that Lord and Lady Salisbury cared nothing for dress ; I remember how Lord Salisbury, going from " La Bastide " to the Casino at Monte Carlo, was refused admission, and was given to understand that his attire was not suitable. Nobody enjoyed the situation more than the Premier, whose sense of humour was keen enough, though seldom expressed.

What excellent entertainments we used to have at the town house of Lord and Lady Rothschild, at 148, Piccadilly. They were the kindest of folk, but they were not born entertainers. The only one of the family who possessed that subtle gift to perfection was Mr. Alfred, whose home in Seamore Place was far more attractive, though not nearly so large as that of his elder brother. Mr. Alfred would always contrive to make you feel that, of all his guests, you were the one whose presence meant most to him. At Seamore Place, you met Bohemia and Belgravia—the best of both worlds !

I can just remember how, in the days when Lord Granville was an old man, I used to look in at Lady Granville's At Homes at Carlton House Terrace. We were there very often, because she was a cousin of my husband, and she was trying to establish the political salon, after the fashion of Lady Palmerston, who made a great success of it.

But Lady Granville, a charming shy blonde, had not the flair to hold a salon. There was no music, and the attendance was very uncertain; one week she might have nearly a hundred people, the next week only a dozen. As she always provided supper for the larger number, it is not surprising that she abandoned it after a little while. I do not think anybody had the pluck to try after Lady Granville failed. The salon does not appear to thrive in London.

It was because my sister was at Stafford House that I went to so many of those receptions; I thought that they were the best of their kind. Certainly the rooms lent themselves marvellously to entertainment, and Royalty was nearly always seen there, so the entertainment had that special cachet.

Brook House, Park Lane, when Lady Tweedmouth ruled, had wonderful rooms, but, like the Spencers at Spencer House, her political gatherings were limited to the Liberals. I am compelled to state that they were not as ornate as those at the other houses. I cannot understand why the Liberal party has never been able to give as splendid entertainments as its Conservative rivals, but the fact remains.

It was a costly business to give political receptions. It was necessary to spend at least five hundred pounds to entertain five hundred people, even in those far-off days when a pound was actually worth twenty shillings. It was not the buffet supper that was so expensive, although it was of the best, because prices were comparatively reasonable in those days. The main outlay was on floral decorations. There was a great rage for this, and each hostess tried to outvie her friends. The great masses of flowers made the rooms look wonderful, but I always thought there

were two things against them. In the first place, the scent was overpowering, and had a very definite effect upon delicate women—most professional singers know that it damages the voice. In the second place, it seemed tragic to destroy so much beauty for the sake of a few hours—when the reception was over most of the flowers had withered.

In addition to the political gatherings of the Unionists and the Liberals, and those held at the Foreign Office, there was still another kind. This was the Roman Catholic political reception that the Duke of Norfolk held in St. James's Square, where representative families of the Faith assembled together with the Princes of the Church. The Duke was exceedingly devout; his receptions reflected his devotion and provided a rallying centre for his co-religionists.

The Duke was the best Postmaster-General we have ever had. If only some successor would have the pluck to reintroduce penny postage what a success it would become.

Receptions were altogether different from the dances. A reception would be over by midnight, but a dance did not begin until the Opera House and the theatres had closed their doors. They continued into the small hours and were more costly than the receptions. I suppose there was not much difference between giving a dance in my day and "throwing a party" to-day. You had to possess sufficiently large rooms, and a sufficiently good chef, hire a good band, supervise carefully the work of the decorators and of the chef, and take care that the champagne should be beyond reproach.

The young men of my day learned early in life to

know good wine from bad, and many of them valued their entertainment according to the brand of champagne supplied. Nowadays I am inclined to think that, so long as there is enough of it, the quality does not matter. Post-war prices, and the duty on wines and spirits, are not conducive to the development of a selective palate.

I have left to the last a word on the very best entertainment in London—a ball at Marlborough House. There was nothing to equal one of these functions in point of sheer enjoyment. The Prince and Princess of Wales were delightful hosts, the gathering was informal, everything was exquisitely done, and the gardens, always tastefully illuminated on the night of a ball, provided the finest surroundings for flirtation to be found in the Metropolis.

The Prince and Princess danced with their guests, and looked after everyone. The numbers would vary from three to five hundred, and everybody mingled happily, for it did not matter if you were a duke or a commoner when you were their guests.

The Prince would have his Army friends, and the sons of those he knew best, and cared for most, appeared to be in the Guards. There would be the racing folk, represented by the big owners, and the financiers, the Sassoons, the Rothschilds, Baron Hirsch, and the rest. The Princess would be seen with her great friend, Lady de Grey, and the music lovers. Under the Marlborough House roof, and in the gardens, all these diverse types mixed quite happily and informally. I can recall no evening that could vie in sheer happiness with that of a Marlborough House Ball. Their Royal Highnesses were, without exception, the greatest host and hostess of that time.

CHAPTER SIX

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

The three periods of my life; a ward in Chancery; "easy-go" trustees; my father as Colonel of the "Blues"; a collection of theological books; the gamekeeper's cottage; my affection for Easton; Lord Rosslyn; Queen Victoria's fondness for my stepfather; "My Lady"; the classics; Disraeli and the Lyceum; the Duke of Albany; Ellen Terry; a white frock with a blue sash; my mother's cast-off frocks cut down for me; my engagement and marriage; some letters from the ill-fated Prince.

I DIVIDE my life roughly into three periods—the thoughtful girl I was up to the day of my marriage; the young married woman, too intoxicated with the joys of life to realize that things would not continue for ever just as they were, and too undeveloped to grasp that the social system was decaying; and lastly, the rather impersonal woman who appeared half-way through the years—a patient striver for the betterment of humanity, asking for no other monument than may be found in the causes she has championed.

I was a ward in Chancery when my mother married Lord Rosslyn. My trustees were allowed to draw sums, nominally for my benefit, though actually they were little concerned with my welfare. Under the elastic law of those days, almost any step could be said to be for my benefit.

Lord Rosslyn was a brilliant wit, and in many ways a charming man; but this period of my life was not altogether a satisfactory one, for the trustees managed the estate so ineffectively that, even as a child, I began to long to take control myself. I saw

buildings falling into disrepair, broken fences, good ground going to waste, a touch as of age and neglect upon everything—conditions I was eager to change!

I came into the estate unexpectedly, because my father died when I was a mere baby. He was the type of *beau sabreur* not found to-day outside Ouida's novels. He was incredible, but he really did exist. His chief characteristics were a great physique, reckless daring, fiery temper, and indomitable will-power. As Colonel of the " Blues," he was one of the best-known figures in the rapid society of his day.

The Maynards had been a quiet country family, occupied chiefly with the maintenance of large and lucrative estates, the entertainment of a few select friends, and an occasional visit to London during the season.

I was born in Berkeley Square, but while I was still a baby we went to Shern Hall, Walthamstow, which was then one of the family seats.

One of my forbears, who was interested in theology, exchanged a portion of the estate for a collection of theological works! That sounds fantastic, but, like so many unbelievable things, it is hard fact—indeed it is very hard! I still possess hundreds of the volumes that went to the making of that dull collection, and these have lain undisturbed in the library at Easton, to my certain knowledge, for a hundred years. They are for the most part seventeenth-century tomes.

If the Maynard who disposed of manors with such lordliness had elected to entail them, the family would have been wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice.

I was just three when Easton came into my possession; we had to make a long journey and got there late at night, so I was tired. The gamekeeper's

cottage pleased me, when we reached it, and I was certain that this must be my new home. I remember crying when I was told that it was not in this cosy house that we were to live, after all, and that we had still farther to go.

Very early in life I developed a deep affection for Easton, and I used to spend my leisure dreaming, and planning the changes that should be made when I came into control. At that time it was entirely in the hands of my trustees.

Lord Rosslyn was the deciding factor in my life. He loved to surround himself with wit and beauty, and a great deal of luxury, so our home at Easton was transformed from a quiet peaceful country house into a great social centre—a meeting place for the outstanding figures of the day.

It was one of the convenient fictions of Victorian society that children did not think at all; my sister, stepsisters and stepbrothers and myself were kept very much in the background, but a little of the influence of the great minds with whom we came into contact filtered through to us. I was also learning a good deal from nature, for I loved the wild life of the park, and all growing things.

Lord Rosslyn was an extraordinary man, the only one in or out of Great Britain who could tell a *risqué* story to Queen Victoria, and go unrebuked. Even Lord Beaconsfield would not have dared to address his " Faery " in like fashion.

I have been at dinner in Windsor Castle and heard Lord Rosslyn spinning a daring yarn to the Queen, while the Princess Beatrice looked as though she were sitting on thorns, and other guests were quaking. I have seen the Queen's lips twitching with suppressed

laughter, and, if it were not an un-courtierlike thing to say, I might go so far as to state that I have seen her most gracious Majesty shaking like an agitated jelly.

Certainly there was nobody else who would have dared. Lord Rosslyn, bland and imperturbable, conscious that the Royal Lady had a keen regard for him, would talk just as he pleased to her, as he did to everyone else.

There were other dames, great, though not so great, in his intimate circle—Lady Ely, Lady Dorchester, Lady Exeter, the two sisters, Lady Bradford and Lady Chesterfield—to whom Lord Beaconsfield wrote love-letters almost to the day of his death—Lady Cork, Lady Ducane—and they were all clever women of eminent propriety. My wicked stepfather could and would break down the barriers of their reserve, and send all of them into fits of laughter, open or suppressed. The odd part of it is that not one of them liked him any the less for his daring.

My mother stood alone in being impervious to the shafts of her husband's wit. I have heard him venture one of his daring sallies, and it has glanced aside from the polished surface of her very simple mind. *Doubles ententes* simply passed her by. More than once I have seen him screw his eyeglass into his eye, and heard him say, " My Lady "—he always called her " My Lady " when he was annoyed—" it would take a surgical operation to bring a joke home to you ! "

Mamma, quite unmoved, would smile at him affectionately and say, " Yes, dear, I suppose so."

Nowadays the classics are out of fashion ; a man quoting fluently and appositely from Virgil or Horace, though he would hardly be understood, would almost

certainly provoke resentment. But when I was young, the men who were my stepfather's guests at Easton rejoiced in bandying classical quotations with him. To hear Lord Rosslyn, Lord Houghton and Bernal Osborne exchanging witticisms in Latin, was to feel a real regret at one's inability to understand what they were saying. From what I remember of my stepfather's conversations, it was perhaps as well.

I have often wondered how I should have felt toward Disraeli if I had known, when I was a mere child of fifteen, that he was already envisaging me as the wife of the frail Prince Leopold, youngest son of Queen Victoria.

I do not think I have ever had a greater surprise than when I was told, by my mother and stepfather, that Lord Beaconsfield was going to take me to see a real play, in which Ellen Terry and Henry Irving were acting. Until then, pantomime had been the extent of my theatrical experience.

This occurred five years before his death, and he was a very old gentleman. As we sat in the box he had borrowed from the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who was one of Irving's enthusiastic patrons, I did not realize that there was any object in this visit to the theatre, other than that of giving me a wonderful treat. Not until he actually proposed me to Queen Victoria, as a suitable wife for the Duke of Albany, did I suspect that he had secured my parents' permission to take me out alone, for the sole purpose of analysing me, and discovering what manner of girl I was.

In this connexion, a most amusing thing happened to me only a little while ago.

I was visiting my mother, the Dowager Lady

Rosslyn, now over ninety, when for the first time she showed me a letter from Queen Victoria, intimately concerning myself. It was written more than fifty years ago. It was a formal demand for my hand for Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, who later espoused Princess Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont, and died two years after his marriage. To this letter, my step-father and mother sent a regretful refusal, without consulting me—fancy a girl of seventeen in those days being asked her views about so delicate and intimate a thing as her marriage! My mother explained to me that they thought I would have been dreadfully miserable in the formality of the Court of Queen Victoria.

Of course, it was an amazing departure from the marriage traditions of the Royal House, for the selection had always been made from foreign princesses. An English girl was unthinkable!

I remember once telling Ellen Terry that Lord Beaconsfield had taken me to see her in *Romeo and Juliet* when I was fifteen. The great actress was always interested in other people's adventures, and at once began to question me, though it had all happened years ago. She wanted to know whether Dizzy had enjoyed it, and what we had talked about.

"I did not pay any attention to Dizzy," I explained. "I was too wrapped up in you and Irving to think of anything or anybody else."

Ellen sighed.

"My own memory is not very good," she acknowledged, "but surely you can remember something about it? You are so much younger than I."

I managed to recall that I wore a white dress with a blue sash, and that my hair was brushed back and

tied with ribbon. I explained to her that it was a greater occasion than I realized at the time—a child whose life in the great world had yet to begin to be the guest of the greatest statesman of our time, whose sun was so shortly to set.

"If only I had realized all this," I told her, "I should have treasured every word that was said. As a matter of fact, I can remember best the things that were said on the stage. I must have succeeded in interesting Lord Beaconsfield, for he was roused, between the acts, from the sphinx-like immobility which I noticed whenever I happened to glance at him when the curtain was up."

It was characteristic of the time that children were so little considered; I was an heiress, having been bequeathed thirty thousand acres, yet I was rarely allowed to wear a frock that had been bought actually for me. Instead, I had to content myself with my mother's cast-off dresses, cut down and altered so that they might not be too elegant for a young girl.

Modern legislation has shown an increasing tendency to protect children against their parents and guardians—in my opinion, a very necessary measure.

When my husband and I became engaged, I was intensely anxious to marry as soon as possible, rather than prolong the delightful period of our engagement, so that Easton might at length receive my care. It was with relief that I heard Prince Leopold assure me that he was not in love with me, for if he had really wished to marry me, pressure might have been put upon me to give up the man of my choice.

Poor Prince Leopold, his was a tragic life. Perhaps the most intelligent of Queen Victoria's children, he was also the most delicate. Just when life was

opening up for him, he learned that he would be an invalid for the rest of his days. He struggled on bravely, but unfortunately the ailment which afflicted him was not one that would yield even to the strictest self-discipline.

The other day I was looking through a file of papers that belonged to my late husband, and came across some letters from the unhappy Prince.

One was dated December 11th, 1881, and was written to ask my husband to invite his sister to be one of the bridesmaids at his wedding. He mentioned that he hoped that the marriage would take place in April, at St. George's Chapel, and asked my husband to be one of his trustees. He also asked Lord Warwick to inquire where I had bought my trousseau.

I picked up another letter of his, written from Mentone in April—three weeks before the wedding. In this there was a note of despair, for he had met with an accident to his foot. He feared that he would have to lean on a stick, and kneel on one knee at the altar ; he added that he was suffering physically from the pain, and mentally from the thought.

As I read this letter, I was forced to the sad conclusion that, although Prince Leopold had been born in the Royal Household, with prospects that must have seemed golden, he was one of those unhappy men doomed never to enjoy anything in complete comfort of mind or body.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PEEPS AT SOCIETY PEOPLE

The Marchioness of Ailesbury ; " Lady A " ; the morning papers ; coachmen and footmen ; Lord Ailesbury and the bishop ; Lady Charles Beresford ; the sporting mind ; Sidney Greville ; Sir John Gorst ; Lord Salisbury ; equerry to King Edward ; private secretary to Queen Alexandra ; the present Prince of Wales ; the Greville Memoirs ; Henry Chaplin ; a broken romance ; double dealing and double doors ; Lady Florence Leveson-Gower ; the Board of Agriculture ; a sixteen-course dinner ; the Amphytryon Club ; Hugh, Earl of Lonsdale ; Lady Florence Dixie ; her tame jaguar ; Tom Firr, the huntsman ; trotting wagons ; International Horse Shows at Olympia ; performing animals ; the " Double Duchess " ; Violet, Duchess of Rutland ; intellectual women.

WHERE are the successors of the ladies of old time—the gracious old ladies who were the most delightful element in the great world as I knew it when I was young ?

I have spoken of Lady Ely and Lady Churchill, who told me much about the Court they served so faithfully through the years. I recall a very charming, but more humorous figure, that of Maria, Marchioness of Ailesbury. We were at Gopsall, the Leicestershire home of Lord Howe, and I shall never forget coming down to breakfast at about a quarter past ten—which was considered a reasonable hour—and finding old Lady A, as she was called, sitting at table. She was so tall, alert, and erect, that I thought she had taken a cushion to support her for some reason or other.

As soon as breakfast was over, she slipped lightly from her chair, and, to my great surprise, picked up all the morning papers, on which she had been sitting,

and trotted off nimbly to the library with them. She was naturally very tall, so the big collection of newspapers—all the London and some of the weeklies —made her height appear so formidable that she dominated the breakfast table.

It was her practice to come down in time to secure all the newspapers. She would not allow any of the guests, or even her host and hostess, to glance at them until she had read everything of interest. Nobody minded, for it was just one of Lady A's ways, and none of them was really harmful. She wore her hair parted, with a lot of small corkscrew curls on either side, and this gave her a quaint old-world aspect. She was a very practical woman, with rigid views on the question of hospitality.

" Never forget, dear," she would say to me, " ' a chop for a chop '—that is the rule of entertainment, in town—or if it isn't, it should be."

I once drove with her in the Park in the afternoon, and for some time I was astonished at the number of passing carriages to which she would make a slight stately inclination, in return for a respectful salute from coachman or footman. I thought I knew a good many people, but I was nowhere with Lady A, and at last I told her so.

" My dear," she explained, " there are a lot of those people whom I do not know ; but I have trained a great number of footmen and coachmen, and they are grateful to me—as they should be."

This was the truth. She had a passion for taking raw young men into her establishment, and having them trained for service under her own keen supervision. As soon as they were properly equipped, she would send them out into the world, with her

recommendation, and find fresh recruits for training. The result was that you could not drive through Hyde Park on an afternoon without meeting a score or more of the servants she had placed. It was one of her hobbies, like the seizure of the newspapers.

For many years she was a great power at Savernake, the beautiful country home of her husband's family. I think she was a Pembroke by birth, and they have given a number of stately men and women into society, but no one more stately or quite so unexpected as Lady A.

Lord Ailesbury, her nephew, went into a hatter's in Piccadilly one day and gave his hat over to an attendant. He was waiting close to the door when a bishop entered, elderly and dignified, but short-sighted. The new-comer peered at Lord Ailesbury, took off his big silk hat, with its curious adornment, and spoke to him blandly.

" My man, have you a hat like that ? "

Lord Ailesbury looked at the cumbrous hat with disgust.

" No, my Lord," he replied, curtly, " I haven't, but if I had, I'd be damned if I'd wear it ! "

Lady Charles Beresford, rather short of stature, was a popular figure, and, in certain places, such as her box at the Opera, she could make a definite impression.

I remember her in one situation that did not show her to advantage. In my early days at Easton, long before the advent of the motor, I used to drive a four-in-hand, and one afternoon Lady Charles was on the box with me. There was a brisk wind blowing in the Park, and at no time is the wind a respecter of persons.

On this occasion, it showed its indifference in the grossest manner by lifting her smart hat, and her yellow hair, and carrying them along in one compact heap, first into the air, then on to the grass.

I pulled up in unbroken silence, and tried to keep a straight face. The two grooms at the back of the coach jumped down, in order to retrieve the rolling head-dress. They brought it back gravely to Lady Charles, who adjusted it with great care.

" How lucky we were not on the high road ! " she remarked.

I did not give her away, but in the servants' hall all secrets are revealed.

Sidney Greville was my husband's youngest brother, and the dark horse of the family. My husband was all frankness and simplicity, and never hid his thoughts from his friends. His outspoken attitude was part of the charm that endeared him to all with whom he came into contact, and I like to remember that he never made an enemy, or lost a friend. His brothers Alwyne and Louis were simple, outspoken country gentlemen, with no interest in great affairs ; but Sidney, suave courtier that he was, succeeded in combining reticence with an exquisite urbanity.

He started out in life determined to make a career for himself, though having nothing more than the limited resources of a younger son of a house that was not too well endowed. Becoming private secretary to Sir John Gorst, he found himself in close touch with a group of rebels, whose rebellion has long been forgotten. This " Fourth Party " included Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and in the conduct of their affairs, Sidney gave the first indication of his *savoir-faire*.

Lord Salisbury, attracted by the agreeable personality of my younger brother-in-law, made him his own private secretary. After that, for many years, he enjoyed an intimate knowledge of all the political, and some of the social secrets of his generation.

But there is not a man or woman in London who can claim that they ever extracted from Sidney one solitary confidence. He had an admirable capacity for turning questions aside, and for rebuking curiosity so charmingly that the rebuke left no scar. He was the complete private secretary—resourceful, cryptic, imperturbable.

When he gave up his work with Lord Salisbury, it was to become equerry to King Edward, when his intimacy with affairs of the moment became closer than ever. Sometimes when we met in the country, the discussion would turn to subjects of which he alone knew the inner history, but never by speech or gesture would he throw any light upon it. He would say that, when he left his office, he forgot everything he had to remember while within its walls.

In addition to his work as equerry, he did a certain amount of secretarial work for King Edward ; this proved so satisfactory that he went, by request, as private secretary to Queen Alexandra, and later, at a time when his health was failing, he served the present Prince of Wales.

Sidney was a connoisseur, like his father and mother before him, and he made a small collection in perfect taste of the *objets d'art* that were nearest his heart. Socialism he detested. I fear this is a reflection upon myself, because I think I must have been the only Socialist he ever met ; but it is right to add that he never allowed his distaste of these doctrines to

disturb our relations, and to the end we were affectionate friends.

Women were attracted by him, and he gave them his friendship. Yet I think I can say that he never had an " affaire "—to us, more rare than a white blackbird. To him, women were charmingly unreliable creatures, to be treated with every courtesy, but not encouraged. Whatever a woman's allure for other eyes, it had none for my brother-in-law.

Once a most enravishing woman sought to compromise him, in order to win a wager with some friends. The situation bid fair to be delicious, and so it would have been with anyone other than Sidney Greville. As it was, she succeeded to the extent that he took her hand, and led her—a chastened siren—to his front door. I believe many bets were lost.

For myself, I am sorry that my brother-in-law never married, because I think he might have had children of character and intelligence. So far as I can tell, from my casual observation, there is room for such additions to the population.

He enjoyed the affectionate friendship, as well as the confidence, of all he served, and because he was so single-minded in his services, he was of great value in a crisis. While his knowledge of men was profound, his knowledge of women was far deeper than could have been expected, seeing that he had, apparently, taken for his motto the advice of the old saint—" Be not familiar with any woman, but in general commend all women to God."

When he died, I lost a good friend and a wise counsellor. As I write these few lines about him, the thought comes to me, that, if he had kept a diary, he might have written a book that would have put the

famous Greville Memoirs into the shade. But so far as I know, he left no papers. I am sure he was too discreet to risk disclosure of the secrets he had guarded so well.

Henry Chaplin was another friend of ours. He was known to his intimates as " The Squire," because of his association in that capacity with Blankney in Lincolnshire, a small corner of the world that he brought into prominence. He was an amazing man, for he went through life, enjoying the best that the world has to give its favourites, and rising triumphant over misfortunes that would have crushed a man of less dominant personality.

The story of his broken romance still lives in the memories of those who survive the Victorian era.

The day before he was to wed a most charming lady, they went shopping together. Alighting from a hansom at the entrance of one of the big shops in Oxford Street, the lady asked Mr. Chaplin to wait while she made a purchase. She did not, however, buy the gloves she mentioned, but passed through the shop to a doorway in another street, where a well-known peer was awaiting her. They eloped and afterwards married.

Chaplin threatened to ruin the man who had snatched his betrothed almost from the very steps of the altar. In effect, he nearly did so, when he won the Derby with Hermit, on a snowy June day in 1867, at the spectacular odds of 1,000–15.

I think he attracted admiration in the hunting field, because, for his weight, he was one of the boldest and best riders to hounds to be met between cubbing time and next year's violets. He could ride at a weight that would keep most men out of the saddle,

and was devoted to racing. But horses were not only his pride, they were his ruin, for the time came when the race-course broke him, as it has broken so many. The only difference was that other men go under.

He had married Lady Florence Leveson-Gower, a sister of my brother-in-law, the Duke of Sutherland, so what could be more natural than that a suite of rooms should be reserved for him in Stafford House? There were rooms in plenty in that great caravanserai, and "Strath"—as my brother-in-law was known to his intimates—was a genial, kind-hearted man, devoted to his sister's memory, and on terms of affection with his sister's husband.

But it was not enough to have rooms and a welcome at every house in London; it was necessary that an income should be provided, and the story goes that the old Board of Agriculture, long defunct, was revived in 1889 in order to provide Henry Chaplin with occupation. It caused great amusement, but everybody was glad, while gossip said that "The Squire" did not reach the Board much before midday, and that his luncheon hour was indefinitely prolonged.

It is well to remember that, in the year 1889, life in this country was not strenuous, and there were no problems of any magnitude before the leisured classes. Those people who could not find employment could go to the workhouse; the right to work or a dole had never even been mentioned. The dockers had just struck for sixpence an hour, a monstrous wage indeed. Though it had been conceded, there were many people of truly Victorian intelligence who prophesied disaster when the workers' victory was announced. If the common people received sixpence an hour their masters could not help realizing the danger of their

wanting more in the years to come. "The more you give them, the more they will ask," was the popular opinion among the employers. "The Squire" was a supporter of this view. The most friendly, kindly, amiable man in the company of his equals, he always liked "to keep servants in their place," and his popularity in town or country never extended, I imagine, to the servants' hall.

But he made an imposing President of the resuscitated Board of Agriculture. He was spared the responsibility of a seat in the Cabinet, and I am quite sure he did no harm in his office—his visits were not long enough. His appointment was typical of the times in which he lived, but there is no reason to doubt that he believed that it was a very proper one. So did all his friends.

Apart from his interest in agriculture, which was genuine enough and grew with the years, and his career in the saddle, "The Squire" had one other claim to notice—he was the greatest gourmet of his time. London owed to him the Amphytryon Club in St. James's, where he taught people to realize that a great chef is a great artist, and a good cuisine a necessary adjunct to the amenities of life. The club restaurant was a comparatively small room, with a membership to correspond, but every member was an epicure.

Henry Chaplin had more than a mere love of food; he possessed a sound knowledge of it, and could have given hints to almost any hostess in London. A sixteen-course dinner was his delight, and he could tell you something interesting, though not necessarily complimentary, about every dish that was submitted to his judgment.

The Prince of Wales liked him, and even joined the Amphytryon Club ; my stepfather was his firm friend, and entertained him. There are some people who say to this day that he was the last of the real Tories. He was for many years a widower, his wife having died while giving birth to her second daughter. His promotion to the House of Lords, in the last years of his life, pleased all his friends. I am afraid that he suffered martyrdom during the War, because he was already an old man, long accustomed to the best of everything, and the food restrictions were a positive torment to him.

I suppose " The Squire " takes rank among the most popular men of his generation, and I am certain that we shall never see his like again, because, in the strenuous world he left behind, there would be no room for him. Nor would he have been content to linger in a world where Labour rules ; he would have been too annoyed about such a devastating departure from sound principles.

My recollections of that great sportsman, Hugh, the Earl of Lonsdale, go back to those early days when I looked at life from the saddle, and felt that I was as near heaven as it was possible to be.

I remember going to Brigstock to buy a hunter when Hugh Lowther, as he was then, was Master of the Woodland Pytchley. Having been brought up among horses, I was a good, even an understanding rider, and my new mount was all I could desire, since it had the double advantage of being Hugh Lowther's choice as well as my own.

I also hunted with the Quorn in Leicestershire, when, later, as Lord Lonsdale, he was Master. I have never forgotten, and never shall forget, the

pleasure of seeing him galloping along at his ease on a horse that was trained to take off perfectly at each fence. It was an education to watch him. I do not think I have ever met in the hunting field a man with hands like those of Hugh Lonsdale, nor have I met anyone whose seat on a horse was more graceful than his, or one whose every action so epitomized horsemanship at its best.

Lord Willoughby de Broke was a fine figure in the hunting field ; so were Assheton Smith, Hugh and Roddie Owen, " Buck " Berkeley, Lord Grey de Wilton, and a host of others, but Hugh Lonsdale led the way as a horseman.

The only woman I knew who equalled him in hardihood was Lady Florence Dixie, whose eccentric and startling personality seemed equally able to attract or repel. She was a rough diamond, and as hard as nails, or even a little harder.

I am telling elsewhere of the influence she had on my life, how she first turned my thoughts in the direction of humanitarianism, when at last her love for the under-dog flamed up. She was older than I, and has long passed from the scene, but I shall never forget her walking about with a tame jaguar in attendance. It required more than a little nerve to approach her when she was in the company of her pet, in spite of her assurance that it was as friendly as a kitten.

Turning back to the Quorn, I remember that Lord Lonsdale used to mount Tom Firr, the famous huntsman, and all the Hunt servants, with horses of a quality that is rarely met to-day—a long-tailed chestnut, perfectly broken and trained, was his provision for them all. In those days, his head-quarters

were at Barley Thorpe, near Oakham, and we used to stay there sometimes. He kept sixty horses in the stables, each one in a perfectly appointed loose-box, and he superintended the saddling and bridling of every one in turn during the hunting season. There was always something in a horse that appealed to him, and something in him that appealed to horses.

More than once he mounted me when I was short, because it was not enough to take one or two horses with you to Barley Thorpe. I never felt more complimented than on the first occasion when he offered me a mount. And I think he trusted me with most of his horses.

He was an excellent host, very kind, very solicitous, and if he earns Paradise, as I am perfectly sure he will in the fullness of time, he will ride past St. Peter on his favourite hunter. The first thing he will do on dismounting, as the admiring shades of past riders gather round him, will be to light a large cigar.

Lord Lonsdale first taught me the delights of trotting wagons. They were used extensively in America, where they were called sulkies, and it was over there that he saw them first " brushing " on the speedways. He was so pleased that he introduced them into this country. I had one built to a special pattern, with a very high splashboard of his own invention, because the American model left people spattered with mud if the roads were wet. He gave me a beautiful white mare, named Minerva, to go with my new toy, and in the trotting wagon it would take me to covert almost as quickly as one could go by car to-day. It must be admitted that, in those times, the roads were fairly clear, and there were no congested areas to be faced on the way to the meet. Moreover, the people

who made up the field in the Leicestershire country came to hunt, not merely to ride.

The sensation of driving these trotting wagons is indescribably exhilarating. If it had not been for the introduction of motors, they would have taken a high place in the favour of those who can master the art of driving a fast horse. Unfortunately many things that are possible in the comparatively boundless areas of the United States and Canada are not possible in our overcrowded island, where the main roads are becoming congested, while the side roads and lanes twist and turn so dangerously.

I rarely see Hugh Lonsdale nowadays, but I hear of him still in the hunting field. I am told that, despite the burden of more than seventy years, he is still among the finest horsemen of our time. He remains the most popular figure at the International Horse Show, held every June at Olympia. We have not always seen eye to eye, and I find his constant patronage of circuses hard to forgive. He says that he has trained animals, and that it can be done by kindness. Nobody who knows Hugh Lonsdale would think for a moment that any animal he had trained had been badly treated ; he is too genuinely fond of them all. I believe he even likes the fox he hunts, and holds the strange view that it enjoys being hunted —in which case, I can only hope that he does not allow a beaten fox to be dug out, because I am certain that no animal that has been run to a standstill can enjoy being dragged from sanctuary, and thrown to the dogs.

But I think he should realize the difference between animal training by a man who has time, patience, and an innate affection for animals, and the training

by a man who has to reduce his charges to complete subjection, in order to make them, quite against all natural impulse, do some meaningless trick that may draw the applause of thoughtless people. The animals *must* do these things at given hours in order to earn their master's living; whatever the necessary procedure, it must be applied ruthlessly.

The only good point about Lord Lonsdale's attitude is that he *does* condemn travelling circuses, and does realize as an outrage the conditions under which these animals, coming mostly from tropical countries, are carted about under our sunless skies. I hope and believe that my old friend will live to see the error of his ways, and turn his commanding influence to some better purpose than that of supporting circuses, and justifying the unnatural performances they provide.

In any case, I greet him across these pages, and, remembering his prowess as boxer, rider, M.F.H. and all the rest, hail him as one of the most genuine sportsmen it has been my privilege to meet, and my wish to meet again.

I suppose we must all wear masks through the ordinary affairs of social life. Certainly there are men and women quite well known to me whom I have never surprised in any moment of emotion, and there was one woman whom I surprised only once. Louise, Duchess of Manchester, became by her second marriage Duchess of Devonshire, and was popularly known as the "Double Duchess"; she had what might be called an almost grim personality.

She never relaxed, never revealed any emotion. She appeared neither angry nor pleased nor vexed, though at times she would be strident, emphatic and

persistent. As a hostess she was correct, cordial upon occasion, outspoken, but always unperturbed —except on one winter evening.

My husband and I were staying at Chatsworth for a shooting party—he was one of the best game shots in England. The custom was for the guns to come in and join the ladies at tea, but for once they did not arrive, so we took tea alone. Afterwards, we went our various ways, and, for some reason or other, I walked to the entrance hall. To my surprise, I found the Duchess pacing up and down in a state of great agitation.

"Is anything wrong?" I asked, and there was a note of real distress in her curiously guttural voice (she was German by origin) as she told me that she could not imagine what had happened to the Duke.

Naturally I suggested that it was some ordinary delay that had kept them, but she still strode restlessly to and fro and I could see tears in her eyes. At last the guns came in, the Duke leading them, and shaking the snow from his ulster.

"Why, what on earth is the matter?" he inquired tenderly, and went on to explain that they had turned aside on their way to look at some new buildings on the estate, and then had waited awhile, thinking the snow would clear.

To all outward appearance both the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire were devoid of the normal human sympathies, but there was no other man in the world for her, and there was no other woman for him. They were not prepossessing people, but their love for one another was a very beautiful thing.

Our unenlightened aristocracy was actually perturbed by the discovery that there were clever women

in its ranks. I remember the dismay aroused by the intellectual attainments of that delightful woman, Violet, Duchess of Rutland, whose friendship I have always counted as one of my joys in life, and whose children seemed once to me not very different from my own.

The artist in her is still as young as when she was Miss Violet Lindsay, niece of old Lord Crawford, noted for her gifts as a violinist, and her skill at drawing and painting.

She gave up the violin early in life, because her understanding of music was so great that she would not persist in an art in which she felt that she could not excel. She knew her mastery over pencil, and I think it was so recently as 1930 that there was an exhibition of her pencil studies.

She was one of the most cultured young women in Victorian society. Her love of art made a number of enemies among those who disliked the idea of women developing an intellectual standard.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRINCIPALLY ABOUT MONEY

Distrust of Bohemianism ; the theatre as wicked, immoral and indecent ; Lady Diana Duff-Cooper and Lady Mercy Dean ; Lady Randolph Churchill ; Winston as a schoolboy ; Conservative or Liberal ; Cecil Rhodes upon Duty ; the Empire as a Dream ; the British Commonwealth ; the Empire-builder ; the Rhodes Scholarships ; Anatole France and human happiness ; South African magnates ; the Rothschilds : Alfred and Leopold ; the park-keeper and the millionaire ; the Empire Theatre ; Baron Ferdinand ; Waddesdon Manor ; draggled geraniums ; the magic power of money ; a private zoo ; Sir Ernest Cassel ; effect of education on the higher classes ; working men in the House of Commons ; Brook House ; striking resemblance between King Edward and Sir Ernest Cassel ; fire at Easton Lodge ; revival of music in Society ; Sir Arthur Sullivan ; Lord Beaconsfield's dinners.

THE majority of the people who made up society were not taught to use their brains ; they disliked making the effort necessary to appreciate books, pictures, music or sculpture, and what they disliked they distrusted. Art meant Bohemianism, and as they had only the haziest idea what Bohemianism meant, they assumed that it was sinister and immoral. True, they did not themselves suffer from an excess of morality, but they were not blatant, and they feared that if they admitted artists into their circle, wholesale deterioration was bound to follow.

The following incident sheds an amusing light on this dread of Bohemianism. A literary friend of mine went recently to the revival of *The Geisha* at Daly's Theatre. In the next stall was a grey-haired woman of about sixty, and during the first interval she turned to my friend :

" Is this really a theatre ? " she asked.

" Yes, it is," replied the puzzled man. " Is there some mistake ? "

" Well, when I was a girl, my mother warned me never to go inside a theatre as they were wicked, immoral, and indecent places. This is my first visit to a theatre and I cannot see anything wicked."

That was a typical example of a very real horror ; these narrow-minded people did not hesitate to condemn a profession about which they knew absolutely nothing at all.

Violet Rutland disregarded entirely this narrow point of view, and never hesitated to give support to great artistes. She regarded Alfred Gilbert as our leading sculptor, and when he left England to live in Belgium, she brought him back.

" I am determined that future generations of English men and women shall possess and admire his work," she said to me, when we talked on the subject.

It was the Duchess who encouraged her daughter, Lady Diana Duff-Cooper, to make use of her dramatic talent ; it is curious that we who have been such close friends all our lives, should both have daughters who have been on the stage. My daughter, Lady Mercy Dean, acted under the name of Nancy Parsons.

It is terrible burden, to-day, to inherit great estates ; my friend and her family have suffered from their possessions as so many of us have. But even now Violet Rutland smiles her way through life, and overcomes difficulties by losing herself in her art.

Whenever I want to think of an outstandingly brilliant woman, my mind leaps immediately to Lady

Randolph Churchill, who afterwards became Mrs. Cornwallis-West.

Lady Randolph was like a marvellous diamond—a host of facets seemed to sparkle at once. One never thought of giving a party without her. She was as delightful to women as to men, and fortunately her son, Winston, seems to have inherited the mental qualities of both parents. True to her American training, she did not check Winston when he asked questions or argued with her. I still chuckle when I remember how, as a schoolboy, he would comment to his face upon the views of such a politician as Lord Hartington, who afterwards became Duke of Devonshire.

In those days people could not see any definite principle behind Jennie Churchill's upbringing of her sons, Winston and Jack. They did not realize that she was developing in them qualities which, in the ordinary course, take years to show themselves. She always found time to encourage her boys to express themselves.

I have watched Winston's career with keen interest, and at one time I was very closely in touch with him. When he was undecided whether to remain in the Conservative party or join the Liberals, I happened to be the guest of Cecil Rhodes, at Rannoch in Perthshire. Winston rushed to him for advice. Cecil Rhodes was not the most patient of men with those who could not make up their own minds. He thought, of course, in terms of Empire ; mere party seemed a comparatively small thing to him. I had been brought up in the " party " atmosphere, and could sympathize more deeply with Winston's anxiety not to be thought what the talkies now describe so graphically as a

" quitter." It was certainly a difficult position for a young politician, and, pacing the floor restlessly, he tried to set forth the many problems that confronted him.

" There can and must be only one deciding factor, Winston," I said at last. " Mr. Rhodes may look at things from one point of view, I may look at them from another. But the real question is not what he thinks you ought to do, or what I think, or what anybody else thinks—it is, which will be better for the country, not for Winston Churchill ? Brains like yours do not belong to any party ; they belong to the nation."

I can still remember his mobile face lighting up.

" Thank you," he exclaimed, " that settles it. I shall join the Liberals."

Cecil Rhodes's rugged countenance was raised to his.

" You have done the right thing, but you have chosen the rougher path," he remarked. " The fact that you have changed your party views will be a club with which you will be beaten mercilessly. Remember that."

" I do not suppose that my enemies will give me a chance to forget it," replied Winston, but he spoke with elation in his voice. He was of the fighting kind—now that his decision was taken, he was looking forward to his encounters with the opposition !

" Poor boy," said the great Empire-builder, shaking his head, after Churchill had gone. " To him it seems such a big problem ; but to those that see Empire, it is only a trifle. Parties come and parties go, and it makes no matter. It is only Empires that grow—do you know why ? "

There was a vibrant quality in his voice that

awakened my curiosity. I saw that he was leaning forward, gazing into my eyes as though he would force me to behold something to which I was blind.

" Because an Empire is something bigger and greater than possessions," he cried, and there was an exalted look in his face. " It is more than any material thing. It is a dream ! Yes, that is what it is. There is no such thing as an Empire, in the strict sense of the word. When an Empire grows great enough, it becomes a Commonwealth—England is going to have the greatest Commonwealth that has ever been seen. It has been dreamed of by a few—just a very few—a man here and there—and me."

" But all the world thinks of you as the greatest Imperialist ever known," I exclaimed. " People think——"

A gesture interrupted me.

" In a way, they are right," he said, more quietly. " I am an Imperialist in the sense that I want British ideals, British justice, British education, to permeate to the farthest outposts of the earth, and I think the establishment of British control is the easiest way to ensure these things. But I would not urge colonization if it were a matter of money only, or of having somewhere to send younger sons when they grow up, and such trivialities. I am an Imperialist because I want to see a Commonwealth of Nations, the symbol of which will be the British flag."

I believe that Cecil Rhodes was the first person to use the now familiar term " British Commonwealth."

His was a curious and wonderful personality. It was impossible to think in limited terms when one came under his influence. Life assumed vast dimensions, as though invisible barriers had yielded

to his touch, and one found oneself on a larger plane. His comments on party were characteristic. The nation, not the party, mattered to him. In his day there were only two parties, but I am sure that he would have liked to have voted for both, watch them fight for mastery, extract the finest ideas from each, turn them out and set up a party of his own, to carry on with the best that their combined efforts had yielded him.

He had a code of his own. Conventional morality did not come within his horizon, and indeed, when one knew him, one realized that, to a man with his sense of values, it must have seemed rather hollow. But his own code was followed strictly, and often at considerable personal sacrifice. For most of us, life is made up of a series of small incidents ; for Cecil Rhodes, there were no small incidents. In other words, he simply did not perceive anything petty, and felt alive only where great and world-shaking events were concerned.

I spent with him his last holiday in Scotland. He was already too ill to join his own shooting or fishing parties, and instead sat on the moors with me. For hours and hours he would discuss world politics, and the British Empire, which seemed much nearer to him than his own daily existence. He would speak of the Empire where another man would have talked of his family life, or his own predilections.

He spoke a great deal about the Rhodes Scholarships, which he had founded for colonials. Like most great men, he sought the promotion of education with an almost religious fervour. I have often wondered how he would have felt if he had known that, when the Great War came, many Rhodes

Scholars were officials of the German Foreign Office in Berlin.

In many things we clashed. Once I accused him of being a dreamer, when he was outlining to me the sort of Britain that he had in view. Quick as a flash came his retort :

" It is the dreamers that move the world ! Practical men are so busy being practical that they cannot see beyond their own lifetime. Dreamers and visionaries have made civilizations. It is trying to do the things that cannot be done that makes life worth while. The dream of to-day becomes the custom of to-morrow. But if there had been no dream, there would have been no common custom of civilization, and we should still be living in caves, clubbing each other to death for a mouthful of food."

I told Cecil Rhodes of a conversation between Rodin and Anatole France on the subject of happiness, and asked him whether he had ever been really happy.

" I am happy when I am planning and dreaming of things that can never come to pass in my lifetime," he replied. " But I expect you mean, have I ever known what it is to be happy with things just as they were ? "

I agreed, and Cecil Rhodes shook his leonine head vigorously.

" No, I have never known that sort of happiness. I was too busy when I was young." He smiled whimsically, as he added : " I have had no time since."

Everyone is aware that the people known as South African magnates had an extraordinarily rapid rise to fortune ; but how phenomenal this could be was never brought home to me so forcibly as by Rhodes

one night at the theatre. We had a box on one side of the house, while on the other there was a party of men and women, including the late H. J. King, who had been our tenant at Easton. I recognized him, and Rhodes noticed it, and the incident set him talking. I may say that the ladies of the party were rivalling a Bond Street jeweller's shop-front in their lavish display of diamonds.

" Yes," said Rhodes, referring to one of the party, " he can spend what he likes on diamonds to-day, but it is only a few years ago that he was very glad to hold my horse for half a crown."

Rhodes had mixed with all the financiers of South Africa, but he made no pretence to admire the men or their methods. He would admit their mental agility, their swiftness to do and dare, but that was all. There was just one exception to his rule of tolerant indifference, for I think he was really devoted to Alfred Beit, who was in some respects a man after his own heart, an idealist.

" If his health was better, he would go far, and along the right road," he said to me.

Those picturesque and romantic brothers, the Rothschilds, were great patrons of the arts. Though they were mighty financial powers, they were indifferent to money, save as a force by which to manipulate their own affairs to the best advantage and also the financial affairs of the lands which had welcomed them.

All were close friends of King Edward, and I think that he found much in common with Alfred and Leopold. Mr. Alfred can best be described as a connoisseur in the fine art of living. In the famous white drawing-room in Seamore Place, I have heard

the greatest artistes in the world, who were paid royal fees to entertain a handful of his friends. Unfortunately, he could not share in the hospitality that he lavished upon those he esteemed, for he suffered from some obscure form of dyspepsia which no doctor could cure. Many a time I have seen him sit at the head of his table, exercising all the graces of a host, while he himself took neither food nor wine.

He used to ride every morning in the park, followed by his brougham. Park-keepers soon learnt how generous the millionaire was; they used to put stones on the road by which he would enter, then, when he came in sight, they would hasten to remove them—a courtesy which was invariably rewarded. He was shrewd enough to know just how the stones got there, but this childish device amused him, so he pretended ignorance.

He was very fond of the Empire Theatre, famous for its ballets, and he liked the animal turns for which it was well known. We differed vehemently about these, for I thought the animal turns were cruel, and he could not see that. When they built the new entrance to the theatre in Leicester Street, he used to go to his box, always Number 1, by that entrance. As he went in, he would give five shillings to the commissionaire on his right, while as he went out, he would give another five shillings to the other man, who, of course, would also be on his right. I heard from a friend of mine, that the senior attendant, as soon as Mr. Rothschild had gone in, would tell the younger one to change places with him; then, when the millionaire came out again, he would receive the second tip as well as the first. My informant knew that this great gentleman, who gave away hundreds

of thousands, would fret if he discovered that the man for whom he had intended the tip had been deprived of it, so the simple trick was never mentioned to him.

The Rothschilds were among the few millionaires I have known who could envisage the grim drama of poverty, with its less sensational, but more painful, daily effects. Their hearts were never hardened; the poor never became a "class" to them, but remained suffering individuals, in need of help. The vivid Jewish imagination enabled them to change places, mentally, with other individuals, a factor which quickened their sympathies and their intellectual grasp of the needs of the poor.

I have spoken so far only of the English branch of this fascinating family that dominated society and finance during a great part of the time when King Edward was Prince of Wales, and for some years after. But the Austrian cousin, Baron Ferdinand, had a personality as attractive as any.

He was a delicate man, all intellect, with an unerring taste in art, and a princely conception of hospitality. I thought of him as a reincarnation of Lorenzo the Magnificent. I remember the great house-warming he gave when Waddesdon Manor was completed, after being modelled on the Château de Blois.

I arrived on a Saturday afternoon, in pouring rain, and as we drove through the grounds, I noticed that the flower beds were full of geraniums, beaten and broken by the storm. Some were almost torn from their roots, others had shed their petals—in short, the storm had devastated what should have been some very lovely masses of bloom.

I happened to awaken at five o'clock on the Sunday morning—I was always a very early riser, and I am

still called every morning at six o'clock. I went to the window to discover whether it was wet or fine, and a truly amazing sight met my eyes. I saw an army of gardeners at work, taking out the damaged plants and putting in new ones, that had been brought from the glass-houses in pots. I watched for a while, then, fearing that I was not so wide awake as I had thought, I went back to bed.

After breakfast that morning I went into the grounds. The gardens had been completely transformed! Not a damaged plant was to be seen anywhere. Also the small army of gardeners I had watched earlier in the morning had vanished, leaving behind them a new garden. Everything had been done so quietly that, save for the fact that by chance I had risen at dawn, I should never have realized the extent of Baron de Rothschild's consideration for his guests' pleasure. It struck me at the time as an almost startling illustration of the power of riches.

Baron Ferdinand kept a zoo at Waddesdon. We used to go and feed the ostriches with bread. He had aviaries, too, filled with lovely birds. Naturally, he wished to adorn the hill on which the Manor stood, but he did it in such fashion as to enable him to enjoy its full beauty during his lifetime—to do this, he transplanted full-grown forest trees. As a frequent visitor, I saw these trees take root and grow, though some were of enormous size when taken from their original home.

I was also at Mr. Alfred's first house-party when he opened Halton in Buckinghamshire. The whole place was furnished in the period of Louis Quinze with French pictures cunningly framed in the walls. The Prince of Wales was there, and Mr. Alfred

exhibited a number of small Japanese dogs, which had been taught to perform. Great confusion was aroused by the fact that, although the chief little dog performed, it was not according to the programme.

It was here that I saw Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild at a disadvantage for the only time in my life. He was really jealous of his cousin, because he feared that Halton would rob him of his house-parties. He was critical, and even found fault. Mr. Alfred was the more accomplished host, but Waddesdon was the more attractive home, and I do not think there was any real danger that the one cousin would deprive the other of his friends. Both were too popular, and treated their friends too well, to run any risk of losing them. Alas for the glories of Halton, which became the Headquarters of the Royal Air Force during the War. The lovely white-and-gold rooms are now the offices of this modern arm of the fighting Services. Where are the Greuzes, the Nattiers, the Watteaus, that smiled down from those exquisitely lit up walls? And where the years of the lavish taste and planning of this home of a childless man?

Another of King Edward's friends, for whom I had a very warm regard, was Sir Ernest Cassel. I used to meet him in the early days, before his financial genius had reached its zenith. He had taken Compton Verney, in Warwickshire, from Lord Willoughby de Broke.

I found him kind-hearted, always eager to help the poor, and lavish in support of hospitals. Later, in view of his wealth and of his organizing ability, I wish he had been interested in schemes of a more constructive kind, particularly those that touched upon education, as I knew that he could have shed light

upon this vital issue in several directions, and it was at this time that I first began to realize that in education lay the nucleus of a nation's prosperity and happiness.

In the eighteen-eighties, the worker had few friends. Queen Victoria complained bitterly that Mr. Gladstone was " raising a cry against the wealthy and educated classes in the country." The Premier had written to Her Majesty to say that " for a long series of years, on all the greater questions—dependent mainly on broad considerations of humanity and justice—wealth, station, and rank had been wrong, and the masses had been right."

The boldness of this expression of opinion obviously alarmed the Grand Old Man, for, a little later, Queen Victoria records the fact that Mr. Gladstone agreed with her that education had been carried too far, and that " it ruined the health of the higher classes uselessly, and rendered the working classes unfit for good servants and labourers."

It was about this time that Queen Victoria commented to the effect that there were twelve workingmen in the House of Commons, and that no other country would have suffered such a thing!

Sir Ernest bought Brook House, Lord Tweedmouth's mansion in Park Lane, and filled it with the costliest and most expensive ornaments and furniture that money could buy. But he had nothing of the Rothschild flair, and his house did not compare favourably with those of the three distinguished brothers, Alfred, Leopold, and Nathaniel, in Seamore Place, Hamilton Place, and 148, Piccadilly, though he improved it greatly by turning Lord Tweedmouth's big billiard-room into a dining-room.

I remember going to lunch with Sir Ernest soon

after he had acquired Brook House in 1905 ; he also bought the house next door in Brook Street, so it was really two houses. On either side of the hall there was a portrait—one was of King Edward, the other of Sir Ernest himself. I knew both men well, but in the dim light of the hall, I could not have said with certainty which was which, save that the King was a little darker. The likeness was positively striking: it was not merely physical but mental, and the two men were very close friends.

Changing London has abolished the hall-porter, that Buddha of the Hooded Chair, who, apparently, never left his place, and invariably explained that his master was not at home. I only indulged in the services of one of these splendid creatures when we took Brook House for the season. Then I found, to my surprise, that a hall-porter does eat, and does sleep, and that he is not entirely inscrutable.

For years social and diplomatic circles were troubled by the thought that I possess correspondence which compromised both individuals and politics. It was true that a great Personage's letters contained some very candid criticisms of persons and events of the day, but one does not reveal the confidence of a friend.

He was only one of a number of people who felt that I was sufficiently responsive and trustworthy to receive confidences. Statesmen, rulers, philosophers, painters, poets, authors, all unburdened themselves, when the mood seized them. I do not think that any living soul has ever had reason to regret having taken me into his or her confidence.

One terrible night my own wing of Easton caught fire. The flames swept away the wonderful modern

library, together with my most intimate possessions. The bulk of my letters formed part of the holocaust.

It is true that I have been the repository of political secrets, but I should like to destroy the legend that there was ever a possibility of disclosure. Confidences given to me have never been revealed : I have never consciously penned a page to hurt, and if those who thought they had reason to dislike me had been as considerate I should have been spared much unnecessary pain, while many misunderstandings would have been prevented.

Under the ægis of the Prince of Wales a great stimulus to music in this country was given, though his own taste was of the simplest. Under his kindly lead, people ceased to think of their enjoyment of it as a secret sin, which they had been rather prone to do, classing it among the doubtful enjoyments known as Bohemianism. Among the composers of the day, society admired Paolo Tosti and Sir Arthur Sullivan, while among musicians there was great appreciation of Sir Landon Ronald.

Hostesses began now to give private concerts in their own houses, inviting a few people who could appreciate the treat. Turning over the pages of my memory, I find that two concert-givers stand out prominently. First is Mrs. Ronalds, whose house in Cadogan Place was for many years the rendezvous of music lovers on Sunday afternoons. She was a fine judge of music, and Sir Arthur Sullivan was always to be found at her gatherings.

The Prince of Wales would always go out of his way to hear music that appealed to him, and for the sake of the Opera he would have a short and early dinner. The shortness did not matter to him, but the

early hour represented a real sacrifice. For some years my box at Covent Garden was next to the Royal Omnibus Box, and when he was using this, he would come in between the acts to discuss the performances.

But H.R.H. did not care for men of letters or for poets. There was something in both which was alien to his temperament, while his choice of artists would not commend itself to the best critics. He loved the painters of battle scenes. He was a great admirer of Meissonier, a friend of Edouard Detaille, and of the Italian marine painter, de Martini, who was very frequently his guest on the Royal yacht at Cowes. Caton-Woodville, who was cleverer with his pencil than with his brush, was another artist much esteemed. When Minoru won the Derby I asked Lynwood Palmer, who had painted some of my own hunters and race-horses, to make a picture of the horse, which I presented to his Royal owner, who was so delighted that he gave the artist his patronage.

The Prince of Wales enjoyed dinner parties very much, but it was he who did away with the long meals that were customary then. Preferring to dine late, as he did, he found that the lengthy repast cut too deeply into the evening's recreation. I have often thought that it was too bad that the comparatively short dinner did not come into fashion until after Lord Beaconsfield's time, for the great Dizzy's dinners were notoriously bad in quality !

CHAPTER NINE

SPORT AND SPORTSMEN, AND A FEW OTHERS

Society etiquette ; gambling ; King Edward and Bridge ; tips ; Lord Warwick receives a tip ; the King's trees at Easton Lodge ; Arthur Balfour plays golf ; week-end parties ; yachting at Cowes ; Royal Yacht Squadron ; women owners of yachts ; the Highlands ; Henley Regatta ; the Duke of Westminster ; my first race meeting ; my gardening friends ; Mark Lockwood ; Lord Lambourne as Lord-Lieutenant of Essex ; a Royal guest who did not smile ; a difficult question of precedence ; private theatricals ; Princess Henry of Pless ; night-clubs ; Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry ; a " die-hard " indeed ; Lloyd George ; Sir George Lewis ; Devonshire House ; the historical fancy dress ball ; the split between the Liberals and Conservatives.

I HAVE known men and women in London society whose word upon any question of etiquette was final. This authority was not vested in them because they were better born or wealthier than their friends, but because of their discretion, sure instinct for what was graceful and charming, and an unswerving discrimination. Lord Clarendon and the Duke of Abercorn were such men, while their feminine counterparts in the social world were, I should say, Lady Lansdowne and Harriet, Lady Ashburton, two of the most delightful hostesses of the Victorian era.

Fairly early in life my husband and I were opposed to high play at cards, and it was regarded as a very daring step when I let it become known that no heavy gambling would be permitted in our house.

It is amusing to look back and to recall that the Prince of Wales once wrote to me as follows :

" Your brother Rosslyn is trying to introduce a new

form of whist, called Bridge. It does not appear to be particularly interesting, and I do not think it will be popular."

A little while after that, when H.R.H. was at Cannes, there came a spell of bad weather. His friends persuaded him to give bridge some attention, with the result that he grew keenly interested, and rapidly developed into a first-class player.

I remember my friends commenting on the fact that much smaller tips were expected on the Continent than in England, which, in those days, undoubtedly was a fact. I think that the large tips now customary were due to the fact that, when Queen Victoria's children were growing up, they were constantly paying visits to their friends. They liked to mark their appreciation of the servants' extra labour by bestowing a handsome gift.

When the Prince of Wales stayed in the country for a week-end, he would always leave a ten-pound note to be divided among the servants, and if he was shooting, of course there was a tip for the head keeper, and others followed this example.

There is so much joy in the act of giving that one forgot there was another side to the story. I remember inviting an elderly connexion to come and stay with me—a proposal that was met, to my surprise, with a refusal. Later I learned that she had not come because she could not afford the tipping that all servants expected.

My husband once received a tip in quaint circumstances. He was out early one morning at Warwick Castle examining some favourite flowers, when an American sightseer came up to him and said that he had come there as early as he could, because he wished

to go across the Avon into private grounds, and see them before anybody was up.

" Just work the ferry for me, there's a good fellow," said the American.

My husband was amused, but he was afraid that his voice would betray him and embarrass the man, so he said nothing. He did as he was asked, after which he returned to the flowers. In about half an hour, the American again hailed him, this time from the opposite bank.

" Look sharp," he cried, " I want to get back."

Lord Warwick went to the ferry and brought the boat back.

" Much obliged," said the American. " It's a fine place. Been here long ? "

My husband mumbled that he had been there for some years.

" Well," said the stranger, " you're a civil chap, so here's something for you."

He departed, having pressed half a sovereign into my husband's palm. Lord Warwick used to wear the coin on his watch-chain, and often declared that he had never earned money so easily.

Many of the trees the Prince of Wales planted at Easton serve to remind me how thankfully he threw aside for a few hours the heavy trappings of his state to revel in his love of nature. He set the stamp of his approval on the country holiday, but in my early youth there were no such things as week-end parties.

Then Mr. Arthur Balfour took to playing golf !

The two facts may sound rather disconnected, but that is not really the case. In my opinion, it was his fondness for golf that started the week-end habit. He

had the courage of his opinions, and apparently discovered that the Sabbath was made for man. It needed only one prominent man to start using the country at week-ends to make society remember that it possessed beautiful country homes.

The Rothschilds improved the occasion. At Tring, Leighton Buzzard, Halton, Waddesdon, or Luton Hoo, the week-end political gathering rapidly became an institution.

The motor-car was then unknown, so society was compelled to limit its area of travel for week-ends. The Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Jersey, Lady Rosebery, were popular, because, in addition to being excellent hostesses, their homes were within easy distance of town. My own home, Easton, was convenient from that point of view.

The week-end holiday was originally a phase of the *vie de luxe*, but to-day, in view of the tremendous pressure under which most people, and certainly all public characters, are forced to live, I think it has become an absolute necessity.

One of H.R.H.'s happiest weeks in the year was at Cowes. He used to race the *Britannia*, and live on the *Victoria and Albert*, where he entertained delightfully. His closest friends in the yachting world were Lord Ormonde, Lord Dunraven, and Mr. " Willie " Jameson.

He was merely carrying on a family tradition by his participation in the Royal Yacht Squadron racing, the great yachting event of the year. George III gave the club the title of Royal, the Prince Regent and the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester were early members, in the years following Waterloo. King William IV gave the club its present name, and was

ex-officio Commodore, and gave a cup to be sailed for annually. Queen Victoria was a Patroness of the Squadron, and she did the same, though she did not, to my recollection, ever visit Cowes during the race week; except now and then to drive through the little town. This was surprising, for at least two of her children were keenly interested, and she would often be staying at Osborne House, close by, before returning to her well-beloved Balmoral.

At that time many women were owners of yachts. Lady Londonderry, Lady Ormonde, Lady Gerrard, Mrs. Oliphant, and other women long since dead, sailed their own small " raters." In spite of the fact that not even their oilskins could prevent their being soaked to the skin, it seems to me that they enjoyed themselves far more than those of us who merely looked on.

When I was a child the Highland shooting season was not regarded as the universal fashion. But as soon as it was recognized that members of the Royal family enjoyed the Highlands, millionaires from everywhere began to take leases of sporting domains, paying sometimes as much as five thousand pounds rent for a season that, at best, could be stretched only to ten weeks.

The one sporting event in which Royalty could not be persuaded to take an interest was Henley Regatta. No one seemed to know the reason, but the result was that it lacked all social importance. The interest of King George and Queen Mary has revived some appreciation of Henley, but not to a great extent, I think. In my youth there were a few hosts whose lovely riverside homes were a joy to the young people in their set. The Duke of Westminster

had a lovely place, Cliveden—now the home of Lord Astor—where I enjoyed one of my first " coming out " balls. It was held during Ascot week, and on the morning after the ball, we drove to Ascot on coaches, and in open carriages with four horses and postillions. In after years I stayed at Cliveden with the late Lord Astor.

One of my most enthusiastic gardening friends was Lord Lambourne (Mark Lockwood), of whom it was said, " He always goes about with a good story on his lips, and a good flower in his button-hole."

Lord Lambourne was *persona grata* with the Royal family, and popular with everybody, for he was a fine type of Englishman, jovial and kind, with something of the breezy manner of a sailor. He had two hobbies—the Humanitarian movement and gardening. Lady Lambourne was as interested in the Humanitarian movement as her husband, and he told me that, when she lay dying, her last words to him were, " Mark, do not forget the animals."

He always hated to see wild animals in captivity, and was strongly opposed to the circus, that survival of the barbarous ages. For nearly fifty years there has been steady propaganda against the capture of wild animals for ring performances. This has been exposed as a cruel practice, and it is disheartening to see personages of high standing patronizing a show, the chief attraction of which was, I am told, the spectacle of a tiger riding on a horse's back.

When my husband's failing health compelled him to resign the post of Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, he recommended as his successor Lord Lambourne, for there could have been no better choice. As Lord-Lieutenant, he had a certain number of official duties

to perform, some of which involved attendance on Royalty.

I remember once when a Royal personage was coming, to be present at some big function, and Mark had a large house-party in her honour. On the morning of the Royal guest's arrival, he had to go and meet her. We all noticed that, for once, he was not in his usual spirits, and inquired the cause.

" I assure you," he said, as we sat round the breakfast table, " that I shall not get a smile out of her."

" Nonsense, Mark," said one of his friends; " nobody could resist you. Tell her one of your funny stories."

" No, she will not smile, even at the funniest tale I can think of," he repeated mournfully, as he went off.

At the hour that the Royal lady was due, we all gathered outside to greet her. Our host drove up with the guest of honour, and handed her out of the car. Greatly daring as he always was, he turned round gleefully to us.

" Just as I told you—not a smile ! " he said.

That made us all smile, for Lord Lambourne had a way of saying funny things that was irresistible. I do not believe that the Royal personage noticed anything, other than a more than usually cordial welcome.

I must admit that I feel a few regrets for the brilliant gatherings of old that are history now, instead of present-day custom. Occasionally, however, such matters as precedence were apt to be trying. Forgetting that difficulties might arise, I once invited at the same time a Russian Grand Duke and the Minister

of a foreign country. The question suddenly confronted me—who was to take me in to dinner? As hostess, if I went in with the Grand Duke, the foreign Minister would be affronted, while if I went in with the Minister, the Grand Duke might be offended.

It seems absurd among friends, and at a house-party that had no political significance, that such a situation should arise, but I realized that a mistake might lead to a deal of mischief. I made my choice with great trepidation. Later I discussed the matter with a personage whose tact amounted almost to genius. He wrote to me:

"As S. is not an Ambassador, it was right that the Grand Duke should take you in to dinner; but such complications are best avoided, and I advise you in future to scan your list of guests more critically."

The worst complication, in those days, that could trouble a hostess was the presence of two Ambassadors; if she favoured one, it was a slight to the other individually and also to the country he represented.

One of the best performances of private theatricals within my memory was given when the Prince and Princess of Wales were at Chatsworth, the guests of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Among clever society amateurs were Princess Henry of Pless, who was a Cornwallis-West, Miss Muriel Wilson, and Mrs. Willie James.

To-day, many of the people who would normally have been attending social functions almost nightly in the season divert themselves by visiting night-clubs.

Tastes in amusement change. In my younger days, there was no such thing as a night-club. Of late I have been reading a good deal of denunciation of such places, which seem to provide a hardy annual, as well

as a "silly season" topic. For my own part, I have never been to one, and have never had any inclination to go, because for many years I have regarded midnight as an excellent time for bed, and seven o'clock as the best hour for getting out of it. Visits to night-clubs do not fit in with these convictions.

But when I read or hear fierce condemnation of these places, I find myself remaining unmoved. In all probability, the reign of the night-clubs will come to an end through boredom, not through legislation.

The most conservative woman I have known was Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry, mother of the present Marquess. She was short, and her head seemed to be a little too large; but her features were beautifully moulded, and she would have seemed even fairer to look upon had it not been for her haughty expression.

Hers was a remarkable personality, for she was amazingly shrewd and far-seeing. She was a born dictator, and loved to encounter opposition, so that she might crush it. As is often the case with those who are born to rule, her temper was what you might call brief, and she made a host of enemies. But those to whom she gave her friendship responded to the gift with a devotion that was the surest testimony to her real worth. She was essentially the "strong man" of her family. Her husband was a great Ulster landlord, and Londonderry House was the background and mainstay of Lord Carson's struggle during the last phase of the Irish question.

People usually use the term "Die-hard" in reference to men, but here certainly was a woman "die-hard." It was she who broke up the Liberal-Conservative association in 1906, when Asquith and Lloyd George began to show that reform would not

wait any longer upon the convenience of the governing classes.

In my opinion, there might have been some surrender to accomplished facts if it had not been for Theresa Londonderry. She took the strong action of closing the doors of her northern estate, Wynyard Park, and also her Park Lane town house, to all who were not of the blood and the faith !

In the years that followed, every movement constituted an attack on her conviction, but she did not yield one iota. She refused to acknowledge such a thing as Radicalism ; she refused to take the new legislation seriously, while for its originators she had nothing but contempt.

Her influence was behind the revolt of the peers, which led to a threat that the House of Lords should be flooded with new creations. When the peers succumbed she was scornfully indignant.

Nothing could induce her to alter her mode of life. When the war came she refused to dispense with the panoply of wealth, or the pomp and ceremony with which she had always surrounded herself. She would not dine, solitary, in her town house, without a full staff of servants, and although people with far more conservative ideas than mine resented the obstinacy with which she clung to her grandeur—which was even then *démodé*—in the end it began to acquire a certain glamour. She was fighting single-handed and alone, fighting against impossible odds, striving to maintain an empire which was already lost. That, in itself, revealed a quality that was picturesque and rather splendid. I was fighting a lone hand in quite another sphere, and could not but reluctantly admire.

With her death the most brilliant political woman

of my Victorian days passed from mortal ken. But she died as she had lived—without having made any concessions.

Jennie Churchill, of whom I have already spoken, was scintillating, but hers was a purely social brilliance. Lady Londonderry, on the other hand, shone with a political sagacity and understanding that carried her to the very border of actualism. But there, unhappily, as I see things, it left her, because actuality was the one thing she would not face.

As to society, no views were more pronounced than those of the old Duke of Rutland, the father-in-law of my friend Violet Rutland. He it was who asked that, if everything else was taken from England, her nobility might be left. He believed that, in doing so, he was asking for the maintenance of all that was best in these islands !

I admire all those men and women who have led active lives, for idleness was undoubtedly the curse of the generation.

I remember Sir George Lewis, society's solicitor, discussing the subject with me. In those days he was supposed to know practically all the secrets of the social world, and it was said that he had once explained that he dared not keep a diary, for, if it should fall into the wrong hands, there would be such a blaze of scandal that the Thames would burn !

He spoke to me of one of those intimate and delicate affairs with which he was more than familiar.

" The trouble with you people, at the top of the tree, is that there is nothing left for you to climb," he said to me. " Worse still, you have nothing to do. Your responsibilities are few, and you can only get through the years by amusing yourselves. When

you have humoured all your fancies, you tie yourselves up in knots, and here I step in, and have the pleasure and responsibility of loosening them.

" In my walk of life, we are happier. The men must tackle their jobs and give themselves up to their work. Our womenfolk do not leave their children to nurses and governesses, but take an active interest in them and in their education. When they meet their husbands at the end of the day, they are glad of companionship, and seldom suffer from the aristocratic complaint of boredom. That is why, given the same weaknesses and temptations that beset people in your sphere, they live without the sort of troubles that I am called in to put right. If I were dependent upon the middle classes, I could reduce my staff and move into smaller offices immediately."

I pause to reflect how many of my old friends are gone, and I wonder whether I have done justice to some who, although my political foes, were my friends in private life, and whose deaths I lament sincerely. How many landmarks have disappeared with them ! Most of the town houses of what were once the " ruling classes " have become clubs. Devonshire House has gone, and with it a centre of great political importance. The old Duke, who served in Gladstone's Cabinet as the Marquess of Hartington (that same Marquess so ruthlessly criticized by the schoolboy Winston), was a splendid type of the old-fashioned politician. He was narrow, perhaps, but incorruptible, for he was above reward, and neither titles nor honours could hold any allure for him. He was enormously wealthy, and had important properties all over England. Someone once remarked that if he wished to occupy each of his houses in the course

of the year, he could not spend more than six weeks in any one mansion.

Devonshire House was famous for many social events, but the one that lingers in the memory of all who were present was the historic fancy dress ball. For weeks afterwards, scarcely anything else was mentioned, and I doubt whether there could ever be such a function again. In those days, aristocracy mingled regardless of politics, whereas, soon afterwards, there was a sharp cleavage between Conservative and Liberal.

In 1905 Mr. Balfour's administration came to an end, and in Mr. Asquith's Government Mr. Lloyd George became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

I had then known London for a quarter of a century, and until that time there had always been something like a friendly arrangement between the two great political parties.

But when Lloyd George introduced some of his badly-needed reforms, and showed that he intended to have things done in his way, there came a sharp break in the relationships between Liberals and Conservatives. The Tories looked upon the new Liberals with suspicion, while the Liberals began to regard the Conservatives as their enemies, in fact as well as in name.

To me it seemed a sign that the field of politics was ceasing to be the preserves of the privileged few, and that the people at last meant to make their wishes felt. Nobody was suggesting that the power of the aristocracy and of the landed proprietors was about to decline. Just how they were to avert this, the governing classes felt uncertain, but of this they were positive—Lloyd George would be discredited, and

the Tory party would come back. The possibility of the Labour party taking their part was not regarded seriously, save by a few "rebels" like myself, who knew the Trade Union heads, and could see that they were shaping themselves to step in.

The chief lament was that strained social relations between Liberal and Conservative had made things embarrassing, since those hosts and hostesses who formerly had delighted in entertaining both must now choose between the two!

That side of the matter made great changes, for I had good friends in both camps. As I thought nothing of the politics of either, it seemed unfair that I should have to make a choice. The result was that I continued to see all my friends though I did not invite them to meet each other!

CHAPTER TEN

MASTERFUL AMERICANS

William Waldorf Astor; *Pall Mall Magazine;* Astor's estate at Hever; the gardens and that wall; his views upon books; an aristocracy not educated; "In the Library"; Carlton House Terrace; the estate office on the Embankment; locked in; the strong-room; bags of gold coins; Southern Italy; Will Thorne; opposition from W. W. Astor; poor relations; Thomas Edison; films as a form of education; "Some idea, I'll say!"; Joseph Choate; democratic Universities; Chauncey Depew; my first cocktail; President Roosevelt; how to govern Egypt; Woodrow Wilson; Clemenceau; Lloyd George; Colonel House; Eugene Debs.

AMONG the remarkable men I met in my younger days I recall William Waldorf Astor. It is not on account of his merits, or his failings, that he has lingered so clearly in my memory, but because he was such a strange blend of both—he was at the same time strong, forceful, and supremely self-contained.

Mr. Astor owned the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Pall Mall Magazine*. I sent an article to the *Magazine* on some subject that interested me. I received a note of acceptance and a cheque for fifty guineas. Long after, there came a letter from Mr. Astor himself, saying that he had heard that my gardens at Easton Lodge were very beautiful, and as he was developing his estate at Hever (in Kent), he would be delighted if I would come and see what he was doing. The suggestion was that he would gather something useful from my opinion, and perhaps on that account the invitation pleased me, for I have been a gardener and garden planter all the days of my life, or nearly all of them.

I travelled by train and was met by my host in a victoria, drawn by a pair of magnificent horses, with a coachman and footman in attendance. Hever is a bright spot in a rather dull countryside, and, so far as the original house is concerned, it is a small castle of the Henry VIII period. Now, a castle is supposed to be a fairly secure place of residence, but it was not secure enough for my host, who had surrounded his park with a great wall. The furniture was mostly old and in good taste.

When we had strolled through the castle, my host led me across a bridge over a moat into a modern Tudor annexe, which he had converted into suites of rooms for his guests.

The grounds were modelled on some of the public gardens of Rome, where Mr. Astor had been American Minister; but there was rather too much statuary for my taste—indeed, in some places, it suggested a *campo santo* rather than a garden.

A beautiful place, I thought, lavishly set out, but I was troubled by that wall. It seemed so unnecessary in a friendly county like Kent, so I asked my host whether he would not be quite as happy without being shut in so closely.

"It is necessary," he replied sententiously, "to live securely. Nobody can get into this place without my knowledge; I take every precaution to this end, even to the extent of having a police guard."

There was something very startling, even sinister, about this feeling, but I said no more. A little later, he pointed to a couple of smart young men, who belonged to what he called his "patrol."

The party at Hever was small, the dinner very large and very long. When, after dinner, Mr. Astor

began to talk about books I found my suspicions and resentment passing. Here, clearly, was a lover of letters, and for the first time I felt in sympathy with him. So far as I can remember, I left on the following day and did not see him again for some time.

When he asked me again it was for a week-end, and I was met in like state. On arrival, it was something of a surprise to me when a secretary asked me to name the train by which I proposed to leave on the Monday. But I found that every guest was consulted as to their convenience, as the place was about six miles from the nearest railway station, and there were no motor-cars in those days.

At the time I regarded this merely as efficiency carried to the point of want of tact; but I question whether it was not in reality the rather definite hint it seemed.

William Waldorf Astor was determined that I should be interested in him, and gave me something of his biography at intervals.

"I live here alone," he told me, "and nobody is admitted to Hever without invitation. Even my own children must be asked before they come."

"What a martinet you are," I retorted, half jestingly.

"I was brought up under one," he replied. "My father was the hardest man I have ever known, and I strive to follow in his footsteps. He was a law unto himself, and a law unto me. He even chose my wife without asking me whether the lady was to my taste or not."

"You have nothing to complain about on that score," I reminded him. I may say in passing that his wife was a most charming woman, while his children, Pauline Spender-Clay, Lord Astor, and

Major Astor inherited all that was best in her. I have never met any children who were less like their father, or more like their mother.

" I don't like your English aristocracy," he continued later in the evening. " They are not educated, they are not serious, but they do interest me. I want to find out all about them ; I should like to be able to explain them to myself. I don't think anybody understands them, and I want to do so."

He asked me endless questions about people, politics and happenings, as though the answers were of the very first importance to him.

But he was skilful in a way, and when he saw that I was becoming bored by his persistence, he would turn to some question of books in relation to life and become quite illuminating.

He used to write a monthly causerie in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, and, if I remember rightly, he chose for the title, " In the Library."

One day he made a bad slip, and Andrew Lang, that most caustic of critics, suggested that those who lived in libraries should read their own books. After that, I believe, the causerie was dropped. Mr. Astor could not bear to be criticized, particularly on any question relating to literary matters, on which he regarded himself as an authority. But when, in later years, I corresponded with him, he did not hesitate to criticize the style of anything I wrote, and even told me that I ought to be pleased to think that he was putting me right.

When in London he lived at Carlton House Terrace, and I remember going to a party there. It was preceded by a long and rather dull dinner. He was a most attentive host, and I think I was the last to go.

" I shall soon be following you," he said, as we shook hands.

" Following me ? " I queried.

" Yes," he replied, " I do not sleep here since my wife died, but in the estate office on Victoria Embankment. There, at least, I am safe."

" But what can be unsafe in Carlton House Terrace ? " I demanded, " With your staff of servants ? What are you afraid of ? "

" I don't know," he replied impatiently. " At any rate, I am not anxious to discuss that now. Come and see me in my office one day, and I will show you why I feel safe there."

By this time my curiosity was thoroughly piqued, so I made an early appointment and went to the well-known office on the Embankment, which has now passed out of the hands of the family. Mr. Astor took me up to a big room on one of the upper floors and pointed to a lever by the side of his chair.

" If I were to press that," he said, " every door in the house would close, and you could not possibly get out without my permission." Then he smiled as he added, " You have nothing to be uneasy about, as you know, but I must take precautions."

" No wonder they call you ' Walled-off Astor,' " I exclaimed. Apparently he had not heard that familiar joke, for he frowned.

Beyond the workroom were his bedroom and bathroom, with their gilded ceilings. If the mood took him, he could live in his office for days on end, as he kept a staff of servants and a chef on the premises.

" Now I will show you my strong-room," he said, when we had made a tour of the apartments.

Opening a door I had not noticed, we went into a smaller room that was constructed apparently of steel. On one shelf there was a range of bags. He took one down and opened it, showing me the contents —it was full of sovereigns !

" I keep ten thousand pounds in cash in this room," he said. " You never know when you may want money or when cheques may be difficult to cash. A man who succeeds as I have done has many enemies, and if he is wise he avoids all risks."

I confess that I left the Astor estate office feeling very much as though I were waking from a dream. The whole atmosphere was so artificial and unreal. To find, within the sober precincts of the Thames Embankment, a stronghold built of steel, proof against all intruders, with bags of gold in secret hiding-places, was enough to conjure up visions of the ogres of our fairy tales. Even when I read these lines I feel as if they should belong to the world of *Nibelungenlied* rather than to the everyday world in which I lived. To think of this big man, with his prominent eyes, broad forehead, and the appearance of rugged strength, as one who was going about in fear of his life, seemed absolutely absurd, yet he meant every word he said.

In spite of his fierce hectoring manner and harsh questionings, I felt that he really liked me and was anxious to be friendly. He sent such pretty presents at Christmas and other anniversaries to all his friends, and was annoyed when anyone refused to accept anything more than quite trifling gifts. But when I opened a secondary school at Bigods, near Easton, and wanted some financial help, I told him of my difficulty, and at once he sent me a thousand pounds.

Then he asked me to visit him in the winter at his

villa near Sorrento. I went to see him, and it was a pleasant visit. For some reason or other, it seemed as if the fears that were so obvious in London had vanished. The villa was accessible, the staff small, the gardens lovely, and his mood altogether friendly and kind.

He took me to Pompeii and the Naples Museum, and proved a most interesting guide to the whole of Southern Italy.

I do not remember how long our friendship lasted, but my Socialism ultimately killed our association.

At a critical moment my old friend Will Thorne, who was fighting to save a Bill for feeding hungry school-children, arranged a big meeting in Canning Town, and asked me to preside.

Although Mr. Astor was on the Continent at the time, his agents in London evidently advised him about my doings ; within a few days I received a very angry letter. By chance, I had worn a red cloak, and I learned that this garment aggravated my offence.

His letter was not only a denunciation of myself; it was a condemnation of Socialism, and a definite statement that he would fight at the polls every man whom we were putting up as candidate. I think it was because he himself had come from the people, not from the aristocracy, that he turned upon them. He hated them for reminding him of his own humble origin. In a small town in Germany, the town of his birth, I was present when, by chance, he met a poor relative. I have never forgotten his painful embarrassment at the fact that I had seen the very admirable stock from which he came.

At the time this rather shocked me, but with advancing years one grows more tolerant, and I can see

now that, to one who prized above all things the one possession that could never be his—blue blood, it must have been real mental anguish to be reminded of his humble beginnings.

For a time his anger certainly knew no bounds. He would make opportunities to see me, merely in order to tell me what he was doing to injure the causes I had at heart and the people I regarded as my friends. Yet, strange as it may seem, I found it impossible to quarrel with him, because he was really like a hurt child. That I should prefer what he called " common labouring men," who had hardly enough money to support themselves with the necessities of life, to him, who could gratify my every whim, was a matter of sheer bewilderment. It hurt his pride in a cruel fashion, for he had never been face to face with the fact that money has its limitations.

In the following years we met very seldom, but towards the end he mellowed, and I think he realized more fully the point beyond which he could not go.

I look back with pleasure to my meetings, many years ago, with Thomas Edison in New York.

It is not difficult to imagine how thrilled I was to find myself speaking with that wizard of the world. He would utter the most fascinating ideas in exactly the same tone in which one would say, " Will you have a cup of tea ? "

We talked of his inventions concerning the machinery that was to make moving pictures possible.

" I hope," he said, " that the time will come, and that you and I will live to see it, when the films will be used to make education more interesting and vivid, and therefore more valuable. The film can teach more quickly and more accurately than any

other medium. The whole world can be brought to the schoolroom by the film. Do you know " —he turned suddenly upon me—" that pleasure forms an important part of education, and greatly simplifies the act of learning ? We have not yet discovered the actual processes by which mental assimilation becomes easier ; but the films should open up a new world to childhood, and it is not difficult to imagine how much easier a lesson in history or geography will be if the subjects of these lessons are actually made to pass before the eyes. Think of botany, zoology, natural history, and chemistry taught in that way."

Edison broke off abruptly, as though lost in the grandeur of a vision of a new and more cultured world.

But he had given me a glimpse of it, too—a faint glimpse, perhaps, but one that I have never forgotten.

Edison roused himself from his reverie, and continued briskly :

" The new education will be through the eyes. The time will soon come when we have talking pictures and colour pictures, too ! Think of that—think of the children who will sit in a Virginian or an Essex schoolroom, and see India and China and Japan, the Arctic Ocean and Russia's grain harvest. They will know what the people look like, what the land produces, how everything grows and can be cultivated to fulfil the needs of man. They will find out how to choose congenial careers, and how to go about their jobs. When they know all that, they won't be so anxious to go to war ! They will have other ideas, other ways of developing themselves.

" The fruit of the finest brains will be used to teach millions all over the world, not merely a few

hundred children and young students. One lecture can be given again and again ; instead of letting our children be taught by mediocre minds, we shall have both kiddies and their teachers inspired by the greatest intellects, whether they are found in Cochin China or Keokuk, Iowa or Essex. Some idea, I'll say ! "

I always remember that quaint ending.

Among other friends from far-off lands was Joseph Choate, Ambassador at the Court of St. James's. A virile, unconventional type, the real Middle-West American, at first he shocked society with his Americanisms, though many have since become embodied in our language.

We first met at a Buckingham Palace ball. Realizing that he was a big man in every sense of the word, and was possessed of the shrewdest intelligence, I was interested in him at once. He agreed with me that democracy began with education, and was keenly interested in my Horticultural College, then at Reading, and afterwards at Studley Castle in Warwickshire. He would come down and give prizes, talking brilliantly to the students.

" You are dreadfully behind the times here in England," he said to me once. " Look what we are doing in America. Think of our democratic Universities, the chances we give to every boy or girl that has brains and character and the determination to succeed. How can you hope, in time to come, to compete with the United States in the world of commerce unless you polish up your methods, and give the best possible education to everybody able to make use of it, regardless of whether he is the son of a peer or a ploughman ? "

" You forget that you are preaching to the converted

when you speak to me," I replied. " Your words express my ideas exactly."

He then advised me to stick to my guns, at whatever cost—a course I had decided upon, long before, as I told him.

Mr. Choate visited us at Warwick ; after his return to the United States he wrote a number of really interesting letters to me, but unfortunately they were consumed by the fire at Easton.

One of the witty remarks originated by him, I believe, was, " Boston is not so much a place as a frame of mind."

I always associate Joseph Choate with that other witty American, Chauncey Depew, who also brings to mind another association—my first and last cocktail !

Mrs. Post was our hostess, and, perhaps in honour of the American, cocktails were handed round. I had never tasted one, for an occasional glass of white wine represented the sum total of my experience in liquor. Mr. Depew, however, was taking me down to dinner, so I allowed myself to be persuaded by him to try what he described as an American custom. The effect was startling !

The pictures on the wall began to shiver, the walls themselves became unsteady, while the staircase down which I passed reminded me oddly of the Channel in a head-wind. This was bad, but worse was to follow.

Chauncey Depew, perhaps the best raconteur America has sent us, was telling me a funny story. It opened with the *hors d'œuvre*, expanded with the soup, became complicated with the fish, and more difficult to follow during the entrée. When I discovered, in the middle, that I could not remember

the beginning, I adopted the air of haughtiness that I have since noticed is induced by alcohol in those who are unaccustomed to it. When the tale ended with the savoury, I laughed politely, though without having the slightest idea what the story was about. I was vexed afterwards when I realized that I had missed what was perhaps a really witty story, and at once declared myself cured of the cocktail habit. I have never tasted another—for which, I suppose, I must be grateful to Mr. Depew.

Another great American I met, though one of very different type, was President Roosevelt. He was my husband's friend rather than mine, for they had so much in common, both being devoted to sport. Nevertheless, I saw quite a lot of him, and was roused to marvel at his unsurpassed capacity for enthusiasm. I never saw anybody more whole-hearted, perhaps naïvely whole-hearted, in my life. In the very last letter I received from King Edward, from Biarritz, he told me that he was anxious to return to London in order to meet Mr. Roosevelt before he went back to the United States. That wish was not to be granted, and so they never met.

I remember Mr. Roosevelt's highly developed social sense, which caused him to attack the Trusts. His desire to protect the citizens of the United States from exploitation can only be described as passionate.

He had also a great liking for the technique of government, which he regarded as another man might have regarded his profession or business. He described government as " the greatest job in the world."

My husband was with him on the day before he made the speech at the Guildhall in which he told us how we ought to govern Egypt! Lord Warwick

told me that Mr. Roosevelt had explained with glee, " I'm going to make a speech that will set you folk thinking! "

He did not know England very well, of course, or he would have realized that the British would not regard a sporting expedition to Central Africa as sufficient to justify advice on our administration in Egypt. But it was characteristic of his active mind —the mentality that could not see anything on earth without wanting " to do something about it," as he himself would have put it.

There was one great American I was anxious to meet, but who passed on before an opportunity occurred. This was Woodrow Wilson, whose high idealism and vast concept of the world as it ought to be, appealed to me immensely. True, he failed, but in my eyes, his failure was a greater thing than the success of less men. Even as I write the words, " he failed," I am roused to wonder whether, after all, he did fail. The world has been moved by his influence, and an undaunted few are still striving towards the goal at which he pointed, though the man himself is no longer here to spur them with his inspiring leadership.

Clemenceau, of the Bitter Tongue, unconsciously evolved what I now regard as a noble epitaph to his memory. Said Clemenceau, during the Peace Conference :

" When I am with Lloyd George I feel as if I am listening to Satan ; but when I am with Woodrow Wilson I feel that I am listening to Christ."

Although I did not meet Woodrow Wilson, I met his shadow, Colonel House. My first impression was one of disappointment, for the Colonel had no

" presence," and until he began to speak there was no suggestion of power.

His secretary, Clifford Carver, had written to us, asking whether he might bring Colonel House to Warwick Castle, and of course we were very glad to welcome him.

It was not until he warmed to the subject under discussion that we understood how it came to pass that he was the great force behind the President. He hypnotized us. He was a man of granite.

He would have faced any danger, and remained cool when everybody around him had lost control —at least that was the impression he made upon myself.

Wishing to meet him again, I arranged a luncheon party in London—the guests were Colonel and Mrs. House, H. G. Wells, George Lansbury, and Ben Tillett. It was very interesting to listen to them. " H.G." is a brilliant conversationalist when he is interested, and he began to speak of the world as he hoped it would be and believed it might become, if President Wilson had his way.

He talked, in his big-minded way, of the money that we were wasting in armaments being diverted to scientific research, and what that would mean for human happiness ; a peace as enthusiastically and thoroughly organized as a war, of the great discoveries that might be made soon, and of the changes in education that could be brought about.

Colonel House was intensely interested, and, in turn, began to speak of Wilson and of the things for which Wilson stood. How vividly he spoke ! We actually saw the men against whose prejudices and fears Woodrow Wilson had to fight. He carried us from country to country, and showed us their politics

from the inside. We perceived clearly that which had before been veiled. I, for one, could not help being saddened.

There was one other great man from across the Atlantic whom I met, and whom I know to be of equal sincerity, Eugene Debs. His name will, I hope and believe, be honoured in time to come in the pages of every American history book. One man fighting in the face of an opposition that, for us, in law-abiding England, is difficult to appreciate, he went to prison for the faith that was in him, and while that helped to break his body, his spirit remained unfettered. Eugene Debs was one of the men who had the courage to fight the materialism in America which, in its extreme form, shows itself in the gangster spirit, in the will to defy the body social, for, and by, the power of money.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

POLITICAL PERSONALITIES

Arthur Balfour; a big man; "Defence of Philosophic Doubt"; "Bright Young People"; the "Souls"; teaching Mr. Asquith to ride a bicycle; Arthur Balfour and marriage; Olympic games; George Nathaniel Curzon; intense nervous reserve; as Viceroy; the Indian people; Lord Curzon's weak physique; the Far East; some telephone calls; two naughty girls; Lord Curzon's anger; Lord Rosebery; Hannah Rothschild; Mentmore; Neil Primrose; insomnia; the Agricultural Show speech; Lady Sybil Grant; her caravan; the Epsom gipsies; when Rosebery and Asquith quarrelled; Gladstone's opinion of Lord Rosebery; Stanley Baldwin; Lloyd George; Band of Hope meeting; intoxicated with his own words; Cobden or Bright as a comparison.

LORD BALFOUR was the best balanced public man I have known; he was distinguished in a world of hasty politicians for thinking before he spoke. He often thought so long that he never acted at all, since the necessity, or apparent necessity—he was always careful to note the difference between the two—for doing so had passed already.

Like so many men who are wrapped in abstract thought, he rarely got into touch with ordinary people, who, after all, form the majority of the world he tried to govern. I have never been able to make up my mind whether this was a help to him or otherwise. It is quite possible that his aloofness made it easier for him to contemplate political moves which would have daunted one who knew the people better.

In temperament he was essentially an aristocrat. But a "big" man is usually more full of paradoxes and contradictions than a small one, perhaps because there is so much more room for opposing

characteristics. Mr. Arthur Balfour was, in many ways, inconsistent, since his reactions to a number of things were unpredictable.

One of his gifts was an ability to step right out of himself, and view himself objectively and impersonally, as he might have viewed any stranger. As Chief Secretary in an Ireland that was seething with revolution and murder, he astonished Europe by the icy determination and immovable resolution with which he handled the situation.

What happened was that the inner Arthur Balfour said to himself, "As Arthur Balfour, I should expect the Chief Secretary for Ireland to do so and so. Therefore the Chief Secretary must do so and so; whether Arthur Balfour, the individual, likes it or not is of no consequence at all."

He possessed physical courage, and could laugh at bombs and daggers, while his rather haughty spirit was contemptuous of the threats of his political enemies.

His wisdom was not precisely that of the exact scholar. Indeed many people think that he was somewhat of an amateur in the philosophy in which he loved to steep himself.

I asked him once why he had written "Defence of Philosophic Doubt," and he replied, half jokingly, half seriously, "Because I could not be bothered to make up my mind about the great problems that worry the learned professors."

Did he mean it? Really I do not know.

In his early days, he had a dash of Bohemianism, and frivolled as lightly as any of our modern "Bright Young People"—of whom my one criticism is that they are not bright enough.

It is amusing to recall that the great statesman in the 'nineties was the guiding genius of a small coterie that called itself " Souls," and was regarded as the most lively group in the society of the day. There were only about a dozen members, but all of them wrote poetry and explained their emotions to each other. A shamelessly inquisitive world eavesdropped when it could—especially during the explanations. It was inclined to let the poetry alone.

It was natural for the polished, quizzical amateur philosopher, Arthur Balfour, to preside over this nineteenth-century Platonic Academy. He must have got a great deal of amusement out of it ! It is always easier to say of him that " he presided " over this or that than that he was of it, for there was a certain impersonal note in everything that Mr. Balfour did that prevented his being in the heart of anything—even amusement.

I feel sure that Balfour the æsthete shuddered when he entered the purlieus of neoteric cities such as Birmingham or Pittsburg. Despite his advanced thought, he was a mediævalist misplaced in modern surroundings. Yet I have seen that man of amazing contrasts teaching Mr. Asquith how to ride a bicycle when they were staying with us.

Why did Lord Balfour never marry ?

One of the reasons was that Arthur Balfour was the last in the world to allow his intellect to be swayed by his emotions ; perhaps it was just as well that Fate decided that he should love at a distance, and remain free to exercise that great intellect in an atmosphere uncomplicated by the continual presence of one who, by virtue of being loved, might have proved a disturbing influence.

We owe the Olympic games to him, and I think he will always be remembered as being a very fine tennis player and a most assiduous golfer.

My dear friend, George Nathaniel Curzon, was one of the most tragically misunderstood of men. Although I came to disagree fundamentally with his political views, I never lost my affection for a personality that was both warm-hearted and lovable, beneath a cold and rather hard surface. " Charming and brilliant " are the words that spring most naturally to my lips when I speak of him.

He was certainly not the autocrat and the hide-bound Tory that the world believed him to be. His misfortune was that he lacked what Kipling calls " the common touch." He was afflicted by that peculiar type of reserve that one finds only among Englishmen—a reserve that caused him to appear icier and icier, when he was actually feeling things more and more deeply. It is a terrible thing to possess the power to feel intensely, yet no more capacity for expression than is vouchsafed to a stone. When he wanted to sympathize Lord Curzon appeared at his " stoniest," to all save those who understood and cared for him.

It was the popular belief that he sought to crush the Indians when he was Viceroy, and wring personal glory from his high position. I remember him speaking most earnestly, one day, on this point.

" My one aim and hope was to help the Indian people to learn to govern themselves."

True, he was ambitious, but I think this had its roots in a desire to rise superior—in his own eyes rather than in those of anybody else—to his bodily suffering, which, as the world knows to-day, was very

severe. His mind was involved in a lifelong struggle against his body, and every triumph was doubly precious to him because it was a proof that the real Curzon had won again over the bodily shell. Perhaps his sorrows would have been lighter, and he would have known content, if his greatest desire had been attained—a son.

He was my friend for many years; close and intimate until he married, a little distant after that, but always a friend. It still saddens me to remember that even his appearance antagonized people, when in reality the fact that he looked erect, to the point of unapproachability, was due to the metal support that his weak spine compelled him to wear.

In the years when I knew him best, he referred to his pain as part of the established order of things, to be accepted without bitterness, and he declared that the one antidote was hard work.

"When you are sufficiently absorbed in a big problem, you can forget yourself, and in that forgetfulness comes release," he said to me on one occasion.

A poor man for many years, he denied himself luxuries so as to save money in order to travel in the Far East and study its politics. It is good to remember that he succeeded in doing this, and thus laid the foundation of his great authority.

I am not easily amused by conversation—indeed there are very few men or women in whose company I find pleasure for long periods on end; but I could listen to George Nathaniel Curzon by the hour, even in my most careless and thoughtless days. Through all his conversation, like sunlight dappling a wooded stream, gleamed the constant flash of his wit, and the

ripple of laughter that seemed the more wonderful to me because I knew of his constant pain.

Only once during the many years of our friendship did we have any trouble, and this arose from one of the most trivial incidents imaginable.

We had just had the telephone installed at Easton, and my young girl, Mercy, with a little friend as mischievous and inconsequent as herself, decided that they would celebrate the event by ringing up everybody they knew, whether in town or country. They did this, apparently to their own satisfaction, and certainly to my cost, until they were bored and decided to seek fresh fields of endeavour.

Over the luncheon table Mercy told me joyfully that she had telephoned to everybody she knew, and when I pointed out that this was a naughty and wasteful thing to do, she retorted with glee, "I've done better than that, Mummy. We sent a telegram over the telephone to George Curzon telling him that 'Penelope' will be waiting for him at Hyde Park Corner, at five o'clock this evening!"

I am afraid that I was more amused than angry, though I did scold the children and told them not to do it again. Then the whole incident passed from my mind.

Two or three weeks later, however, it was brought back to me with dismaying sharpness. I received an angry letter from Lord Curzon telling me that he had been astonished to receive an offensive telegram from Dunmow, and that he had been at some pains to trace it to Easton Lodge.

I sat down at once and wrote my explanation and apology. I thought this would end the matter, and it did not. I had a further letter, from a still angry

Lord Curzon, prophesying the worst ends for children who behaved so abominably to their elders !

I poured more oil on the troubled waters, and eventually smoothed them ; but the side of it that hurt me was not my old friend's outburst of anger, which was comprehensible, but the feeling that his inability to see the humorous side of a piece of stupidity —on the part of two children not more than nine or ten years old—was due to his state of health.

I wonder whether there are many people who have noted, as I have over a long period of years, that many public characters are admired for gifts they do not possess, while those they have in abundance are ignored.

In my opinion, the public estimate of a person does not always agree with that of those in touch with him.

Such was the case with the late Lord Rosebery. He was praised, it seemed to me, for qualities he did not possess, while his very real accomplishments were ignored.

He was that rare thing, a cultured sportsman. Some of the Victorian judges of horseflesh would have been unable to write a two-page letter without making mistakes in spelling, and could not have expressed themselves *viva voce* without a very justifiable nervousness and hesitation. Lord Rosebery, on the other hand, was equally well-informed as to the points of a race-horse and the aphorisms of the Greek or Roman poets and philosophers.

There was a streak of the gambler in his nature, but, so far as I know, only where horses were concerned. He never hunted and did not care for the gun.

It was Lord Rosebery's good fortune to win, together with money beyond counting, the deep affection of

Miss Hannah Rothschild, daughter of old Baron Meyer de Rothschild, the owner of Mentmore, that rather rococo palace in Buckinghamshire. Lord Rosebery never cared about Mentmore, preferring his other homes, Dalmeny in Scotland and the Durdans at Epsom.

Hannah Rothschild was without beauty, but she possessed brains and charm. Lord Rosebery felt her death so acutely that he mourned her to the end of his life. Though there were any number of women well suited to him, who would have been only too happy to assume the responsibilities, he never married again.

The death of his son, the brilliant Neil Primrose, was a blow so severe that it killed Lord Rosebery's interest in life. His intellect remained alive—it was too powerful to collapse under any weight of suffering —but he clung no longer to the prospect of living.

We corresponded for many years, and when he could do no more than sign a typescript that he had dictated, he still wrote to me.

" If only I could sleep," he said to me, pathetically, the last time I saw him. " If only I could sleep."

Eternal sleep descended upon him soon afterwards. If there is an after-life, I sincerely trust that Lord Rosebery finds in it the rest that eluded him here so cruelly and persistently. I remember how powerless the doctors were to combat with his insomnia, and how he would go out driving at night in the hope of tiring himself, or walk through the park alone in the small hours, wooing the sleep that never came.

Apparently he had all that makes for happiness— a silver tongue, a host of friends, money that ran into millions. He had achieved what were said to be his

two dearest wishes—to be Prime Minister of England and to win the Derby. But sorrow dogged his path, and when the end came I think he must have welcomed it with relief.

Lord Rosebery was a more emotional man than was generally believed by those who judged by appearances; despite his intellectual gifts, he was tormented, on occasion, by nerves. I remember that my husband and I brought him down from London to attend an Agricultural Show in Essex, so that he could speak to the farmers at luncheon.

Lord Rosebery could have debated affairs of State with Ambassadors, he would have addressed the House of Lords, he might have made an after-dinner speech at Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace, without turning a hair. But he was utterly afraid of those farmers!

"Brookie," he said to my husband, "don't you think you had better make the speech yourself?"

"No," said my husband, "they want to hear you."

Lord Rosebery did all he could to support his contention that his host would be the better person to address the farmers; failing to produce any real reason, he said, hesitantly, "I think you ought to do it; after all, you are an Essex man."

My husband replied that it would be impossible for him to speak, and that the farmers would be disappointed if the speech did not come from Rosebery himself.

I noticed that he ate scarcely anything and looked thoroughly miserable; I encouraged him laughingly, but I began to fear a fiasco.

But the moment his name was called, a change took

place in the man. He rose, amid cheers, and, speaking confidently, and as though it was the one thing he had been most eager to do, made the best speech I have heard, before or since, at an agricultural meeting!

His daughter, Lady Crewe, has inherited both his talent and his wit. Lady Sybil Grant writes a great deal, and she has explored England from a gipsy's view-point, for she is an experienced caravaner who has followed little-known routes.

I once heard from a friend of mine a rather amusing story about Lady Sybil. She took her caravan to Epsom one year for the Derby. At that time there were a number of gipsies who congregated near the race-course, in order to make money by fortune-telling and so on. Seeing a strange caravan, they approached Lady Sybil and made a fair offer to let her share in the spoils!

I have hinted elsewhere, with perhaps unnecessary reticence, of the part I took in reconciling two great Liberal politicians. Now I have been asked by many people to be more explicit. The occasion having arisen, I take it. The politicians were Lord Rosebery and Mr. Asquith. Here are the facts.

I went one morning to Lord Rosebery's house in Berkeley Square, and found him in his library surrounded by newspapers. An occasion had arisen when one of his political acts was open to misrepresentation, and he thought that Mr. Asquith, knowing the facts, should have defended him.

But Mr. Asquith had taken quite another view. Lord Rosebery had been attacked, and he was always hypersensitive both to attacks and to newspaper criticism. He could not realize that daily papers only live for a few hours, or that the general reader

has a short memory for the delinquencies of politicians, seeing that all politicians are nearly always delinquent.

" See the position in which I am placed," he said angrily, pointing to the pencilled paragraphs. " Asquith has done this deliberately, and I will have nothing more to do with him."

I knew that this would not do. The fortunes of the Liberal party would not admit of a sustained quarrel between these two men of ripe judgment and practical experience. The breach must be healed. In those days we had no choice except between Conservatism and Liberalism, and in such desperate circumstances Liberalism is the lesser of the two evils, in spite of the fact that its adherents must always quarrel among themselves if they have nobody else with whom to quarrel.

" Do what you please," he said, " but remember what I've said. No more associations with that man —he has made it impossible."

I was going to Warwick, and I chanced to know that Mr. Asquith was to speak at Oxford on the following day. I sent him an urgent note, saying that I wanted to see him on an important matter, and would meet him the next day. He replied that he would be at Leamington station, with twenty minutes to spare, on the following afternoon, as he had to change trains. I sent a messenger to the station-master at Leamington, who very kindly placed his private room at our disposal. In the brief twenty minutes that elapsed, I explained the situation to Mr. Asquith, telling him how hurt Lord Rosebery had been by his criticism. Then I pointed out how necessary it was that the party should remain united, and said that the next move was really up to him.

He was deeply concerned, and assured me that he had not intended to injure Lord Rosebery by his speech, nor to say anything that might provoke a breach.

" Well," I said, " it is up to you to take the next step. You must invite yourself to Mentmore for the week-end, and you may be sure of a friendly reception in spite of Lord Rosebery's present mood. But *you* must make the overture, because, at the moment, he is utterly unfriendly, and, so far as I can see, with some justification."

I had just succeeded in convincing Mr. Asquith when the train came in. I finished my business at Warwick, returned to London, and left the great protagonists to settle their differences. Mr. Asquith went to Mentmore and the breach was healed.

Much as I admired Lord Rosebery, I must admit that he was a man who made many mistakes. Gladstone said of him that he was the cleverest man in politics ; but in spite of his qualities he was not a good Cabinet Minister. Yet everybody thought he was marked out for that special office, and it was one of his wife's earliest prophecies that he would go to the Foreign Office. I have been told that one of her wedding gifts to him was a Ministerial dispatch box !

But he was quick-tempered in those days, and in Mr. Gladstone's last Government he quarrelled with the French Ambassador, Monsieur Waddington, on a matter of etiquette.

The appointment of Lord Rosebery to be Prime Minister was definitely made by Queen Victoria herself, for she liked him. He had a silver tongue. It was expected in political circles that Lord Granville would be the Foreign Minister when Lord Rosebery

received the appointment, and that Lord Spencer would be Prime Minister rather than Lord Rosebery. Here again, as on several other occasions, Queen Victoria's view was not that of her advisers. She prevailed, because she was a woman who knew her own mind.

Political quarrels of the Rosebery-Asquith type are common enough, but there are great friendships in politics of which the world hears very little. That between Winston Churchill and the late Lord Birkenhead is an outstanding example. I believe there is a real friendship between Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Stanley Baldwin is far more progressive than the rank and file of his party suspect, and that is why so many of us, while disliking his politics, hope that he will survive the onslaught upon his party position. He will never pander over much to Die-hards or Backwoodsmen.

My first sight of that astonishing politician, Mr. Lloyd George, took place years ago when I went to Birmingham in connexion with some Band of Hope meeting, to give away the prizes, if I remember rightly. A little man, quite a stranger to me, stood up and made a remarkable speech in favour of Temperance. The general impression I had was that he must be a schoolmaster, but I asked afterwards, and was told that he was a lawyer. I am sure he was not in Parliament then, but it was not possible to listen to him for a couple of minutes without realizing that I was in the presence of a born orator, a man who believed everything he said—certainly while he was speaking. I have always held the opinion that Mr. Lloyd George could intoxicate himself with his own words.

I think he has moments of vision, when he sees

all things clearly, but, in my humble opinion, he sees too many things. He lacks the single driving-force that made the reputation of Liberals like Gladstone, Cobden, or Bright, who never allowed side-issues to turn them—their narrowness was, in truth, their political salvation. They had their goal and they drove straight for it. The political skill and daring of Mr. Lloyd George must be acknowledged, while resenting his method of applying them to the problems of the hour.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MEN OF MENTALITY

Lord Tennyson; the throne-like chair; Edward Carpenter; vivisection; Sir Oliver Lodge; limitations of Materialism; Edith Cavell; wonderful discoveries in physics; Dickens, Charles Reade and Thackeray; Edison; the old public-houses; gaols for sale; W. T. Stead; his trip to Russia; the Tsar and his people; Nihilism; Cecil Rhodes; the Rhodes Scholarships; R. B. Cunninghame Graham; Annie Besant; "Bloody Sunday"; John Burns; Bow Street Police Court; Herbert Burrows; the New Thought Movement; William Morris, the poet; prison experiences of Stead and Graham; Scottish Nationalist Movement; W. H. Hudson; "Rima" memorial; "Modern" music; Holloway Prison sparrows; the Easton sanctuary; the protection of wild life; Stead and the traffic in children; Theosophical Society; Madame Blavatsky; Hyndman and Stead; John Burns and Stead; "Julia," the guiding spirit; the fateful voyage of the *Titanic;* my lecture tour in the States; Upton Sinclair; an uncompromising Socialist; "The Jungle"; Welsh miners prefer cheese; M. Jaurès, the French Socialist; Viviani and Briand; Mussolini.

LOOKING back over the long years, I hold myself fortunate in having preserved the friendship of so many men and women to whom my outlook of life is alien.

I think that, in truth, there is a certain philosophic sense among people of intelligence.

Sometimes I feel as though I have lived in several different worlds, so diverse are the people I have met, so far apart their interests and activities.

I remember almost everybody being angry with me because I did not particularly like Lord Tennyson—in spite of the fact that he was quite nice to me, and gave me as a wedding present a volume of his poems, with a few corrections here and there in his own handwriting.

I shall never get over the recollection of Lord Tennyson sitting in a throne-like chair at my stepfather's house in Carlton Gardens, receiving the homage of men and women, and only condescending to reward it occasionally with a monosyllable. I remarked to a friend that the great poet, seated in that lofty chair, looked almost as dignified as Ahasuerus and about as approachable! Alas, my friend, innocently enough, repeated my comment, and for days I was looked upon as a barbarian.

I retain very pleasant memories of Edward Carpenter. Cruelty in any form, whether of man to man, or man to beast, revolted him. The last time I heard from him was a note that reached me as I was going to take the chair at a meeting to denounce vivisection.

"I cannot join you," he wrote, "for I am not well enough, but I am sending you my heartfelt wishes, and a cheque towards the expenses of the meeting."

As I write, a host of beloved friends spring to my mind, and it is indeed a difficult matter to speak more of one than of another.

Sir Oliver Lodge must, however, have a special place in these recollections. It used to be one of my joys to persuade him to come to Warwick Castle from Birmingham University, of which he was Principal.

The thing that has always commanded my intense admiration is Sir Oliver's refusal to be bound by the limitations of materialism. One of the greatest physicists that ever lived, his motto might well have been paraphrased from Edith Cavell's "Materialism is not enough." I remember once beginning a sentence by saying, "Since you have lost your son"; Sir Oliver raised high his great dome-like head and interrupted me. "I beg your pardon, I have not lost my son.

My son has been removed from this particular sphere, which is a totally different matter."

Sir Oliver Lodge's one intellectual sorrow is that his brother scientists have not been wise enough to join his excursions into immaterial space. He considers that these experiments must bring happiness to humanity at large, by removing all sense of loss at the death of some dearly loved one, and doing away with the fear of death.

Unless one has come into contact with him, it is almost impossible to gauge his largeness of mind, his utter indifference to the things that most people consider important. His interest in the intellectual and spiritual world is so great that he neglects to think of his own needs. It was his wonderful discoveries in physics that made wireless possible. He knew quite well that if he chose to patent these himself a fortune was his. But he held that all great discoveries belong to the world, and therefore he gave to the people without a thought of self.

To one of his noble nature, the knowledge that he has given so much enlightenment to the world, and that he has afforded so many millions of people pleasure as well as instruction, has been his reward. What a superb figure of a man!

When we look back at the times portrayed or satirized by Dickens, Charles Reade, and Thackeray, we are bound to realize the great difference that exists between the home life of those days and the up-to-date home. Let us not lose sight of the fact that many of the changes have been brought about by the efforts of such men as Oliver Lodge, Edison, and their fellow-scientists.

Through Edison the burden of work has been

lightened in all directions. Through Sir Oliver Lodge almost every home to-day can be a centre of entertainment and culture.

The sordidness that drove men, and, alas, women to the public-houses, because home was unbearable, and offered no attractions beyond food and shelter, has been banished by these great scientists, who are our real reformers. People who used to drink and gamble away their wages often did so because there was nothing else they could do. To-day they can go to the talkies, or turn on the wireless, and obtain wholesome entertainment. It is through the work of such men that there are gaols for sale to-day, because there are not sufficient criminals to make it necessary to retain them!

Mr. Stead was the most idealistic person I have ever met, and I do wish that the fire at Easton had spared his letters, for they were so full of interest. I think that almost every act of his life showed him as a great-hearted man. His exposure of the evil treatment of children is well known. Less well known, I think, was his trip to Russia, which was prompted by an urge to bring home to the Tsar the need for those steps towards peace which eventually led to the consecration of the Palace of Peace at The Hague.

The public never learned how Stead, a simple Englishman, without diplomatic support, gained the ear and confidence of the Tsar. In some mysterious way, he achieved this triumph, and was perfectly frank with the Russian ruler, seeking, by every means known to him, to make him understand the unfavourable conditions in which the masses of his people lived. Personally, I know that the meeting between Stead and the Tsar was brought about through the

Englishman's friendship with Madame Novikoff, the Tsar's apologist and supporter in the English Press.

When telling me about his visit to the Winter Palace, Mr. Stead explained that the Tsar was perfectly serious in thinking that he could order peace as he would have declared war !

Even in those days far-sighted people like W. T. Stead realized that Europe was heading for disaster unless drastic changes were brought about. Judging by some of the things he said to me, I have little doubt he knew that if the Tsar failed to effect big and beneficial alterations in the social conditions, then some such upheaval as Nihilism must triumph.

" Russia is without moderate-minded politicians," he said to me. " It is divided into two bitterly opposed groups—reactionaries and Nihilists. Unless there are concessions on both sides—which means the creation of a new class hitherto unknown in Russia, and comparable in some ways with our own middle class—a clash there must be, and the clash will be disastrous."

He told me much of the simple homely life of the Royal Household. The Tsarina used to take the place of her nurse and gave the children their bath in the evening.

Stead's influence over Cecil Rhodes was considerable ; it was he who inspired the great Imperialist to found the Rhodes Scholarships.

I recall the association of my friend W. T. Stead with another great friend of mine with whom I am still in touch, namely R. B. Cunninghame Graham, the famous writer and traveller. Mr. Stead was associated with Cunninghame Graham and Annie Besant in the fracas that was known for so many years as " Bloody Sunday."

" Bloody Sunday," in the Autumn of 1887, was the culmination of a period of intense Labour unrest and trouble in Ireland. The Labour men and the Radicals sympathized with the Home Rulers, and, acting together, they organized a demonstration protesting against the attitude of the Government. The police, fearing disturbance, issued an order that Trafalgar Square was to be closed to public speakers. Great masses of people, however, were determined to protect their right to free speech at all costs.

John Burns and Cunninghame Graham, who was then a Member of Parliament, decided to ignore the police order. Vast crowds gathered, which these two distinguished men attempted to address.

The police sought to enforce their order, and a riot followed, in which a man was killed.

Next morning Annie Besant appeared at Bow Street Police Court and addressed the magistrate. She produced bail and paid fines for a number of those who had been arrested and manhandled. Later, my friend Stead, with Herbert Burrows, Annie Besant, and other leaders of the New Thought movement, walked in procession, following the hearse of the man who had been killed. William Morris, poet, craftsman, and social reformer, also joined the procession.

Both Cunninghame Graham and Stead had been in prison—the former for obstructing the police, the latter for exposing the traffic in little children. Each has written a moving study of his prison experiences.

From my knowledge of Stead, I may say that, on the whole, he enjoyed his prison experience. Cunninghame Graham hated it, if I judge aright.

All things considered, Cunninghame Graham has been the most picturesque figure in the Labour

movement, and also in the world of art and literature, for many years past. But when we last met, some time in the summer of 1931, at the house of a mutual friend, he said nothing about Socialism and much of the Scottish Nationalist movement. This is typical of the man who, to-day, is probably the finest living writer of picturesque prose. I imagine he thinks that Socialism has now become fashionable, therefore he can refrain from further activities on its behalf.

Scottish Nationalism, on the other hand, needs a picturesque leader, and it is a young movement, though it cannot be said to lack vigour. So he is there, and although he has almost reached his eightieth year, he is well-nigh as forceful and active as ever. He is still one of the best horsemen in London.

He has always possessed a flair for getting in touch with fine artists and writers who have not received their full measure of public appreciation. He was a friend of W. H. Hudson long before that great writer was recognized; an admirer, too, of Epstein, and must plead guilty to the charge of being partly responsible for the " Rima " memorial in Hyde Park. He has a great feeling for the Paris school of Impressionist painters, and doubtless, if music appealed to him, he would be among the admirers of Scriabine, Max Reger, and those who are even more " modern."

A really powerful speaker and an accomplished linguist, Cunninghame Graham served the Government during the war in an unusual way. He made use of his knowledge of horseflesh and of languages in order to collect horses in Uruguay and Paraguay. It was a particularly hard task for him, because he loves horses, and he grieved bitterly for the fate that lay in store for most of his charges.

Like W. T. Stead, who fed the sparrows on the exercise ground in Holloway Prison, Cunninghame Graham is a great lover of wild life, and has never cared to handle a gun. That was why I asked him to dedicate the sanctuary at Stone Hall, in the Park at Easton, to the memory of Hudson. I have never forgotten the vivid speech he made when he did so.

I think that all birds should be equally protected; consequently I have never permitted the extermination of jackdaws in my grounds. They are mischievous little things, but their worst offence is that they want plenty to eat—a fault not limited to their particular kind. Alas, they have raided the sanctuary now and again, and have frightened away many of the rare birds that should be nesting there. The woods all round, however, are free from intruders, so that the rarest of our summer migrants may find a home, and I know, from actual observation, that a great number of them do so.

There is a curious thing that I have noticed over a long period of years—the men and women who have stood up best for their fellow-men have been keenest for the protection of wild life. Annie Besant goes so far as to limit herself to a vegetarian diet and refuses to wear furs. At one time she even tried to do without shoe leather, but found that there was no available substitute. I am perfectly certain that she would not take the life of a wasp or a fly.

I remember Mr. Stead telling me that when he published the facts of his devastating exposure of the traffic in children, Bernard Shaw offered to take as many quires of the *Pall Mall Gazette* as he could carry! These he proposed to sell in the streets.

The offer was not accepted, but the incident serves to show Shaw's sincerity.

How strange it is to remember that this occurred nearly fifty years ago, when Bernard Shaw, Cunninghame Graham, William Morris and the rest were all out to champion unpopular causes and were themselves most unpopular. It is worth remembering that it was owing to W. T. Stead that Mrs. Besant became a theosophist, and since the death of Madame Blavatsky has been the President of the Theosophical Society. Annie Besant's association with theosophy came about because Mr. Stead sent her Madame Blavatsky's " Secret Doctrine " to review in 1889.

The book appeared in two very thick volumes, and Stead sent these to her with a note to say that his reviewers would not look at them, but he thought she was " mad enough to be quite well-informed on these recondite subjects, and would review the work effectively."

Not only did " A.B." write the review, but she sought Madame Blavatsky's acquaintance, lived with her until her death and then filled her vacant place.

To-day, in her eighty-fourth year, Annie Besant, travelling the world over, never uses train or boat when an aeroplane is available.

I think that the world will be poorer when the last of those old fighters of the 'eighties have passed on.

I should not like to pretend for a moment that my opinion of Stead was shared by all his contemporaries.

My old friend Hyndman could not endure him at any price, denouncing him as self-conscious and unscrupulous.

Stead suffered for his extraordinary carelessness in the matter of dress and appearance, as well as from his thoughtlessness in speech. It has been said that when he went for trial, in connexion with the *Pall*

Mall Gazette revelations, he made the worst possible impression owing to this slovenly and shabby appearance.

G.B.S. recalls a story, told by John Burns, to the effect that he and Stead were crossing Westminster Bridge together one night. Stead had been talking about " Julia," his guiding spirit (his ardent advocacy of spiritualism will be remembered by all, I think), and Burns stopped suddenly.

" Stead, if I were a true friend to you I should chuck you over that parapet into the river."

It is fair to add that Shaw concluded his diatribe by saying that " there was no malice in him. He did not stab or sneer ; he was neither envious nor jealous."

In the end Stead's devotion to Julia, the spirit, earned him a good deal of ridicule, but he was always indifferent to this. Indeed, he appeared to have borne Julia no ill-will for telling him that his daily paper was going to be a success, though, if I remember correctly, it did not last a month.

I saw him for the last time on the night before he sailed on the *Titanic*, to preach world-peace and to establish an English-speaking union. I had been to the United States in 1911 to deliver a series of lectures, but I had found the strain and the rush too much for me—to say nothing of the overwhelming hospitality ! As I could not carry on the work I came home. Mr. Stead took my undelivered lectures with him, in order to let the Americans hear, by proxy, the English version of the suffrage question, which was the question of the hour.

I know that it has been said that he had a premonition of death, but this I can contradict. On the last evening we spent together, I found him

cheerful, hopeful and keen about his work. He had often said to me, " I shall be stoned some day in the market-place," but he had no supernatural warning that the sea awaited him. To his credit be it said that, in spite of all the opportunities he had had to make money, he died a poor man, although his friend Cecil Rhodes constantly but unsuccessfully pressed offers of assistance on him.

It was not very often that Cecil Rhodes failed to get his own way, for his was a lovable, as well as a strong, or perhaps I should say a mighty, personality. I shall remember him always as the most vivid and forceful of all the great men I have had the good fortune to know. I think of him always as a Rodin statue come to life, gifted with a soul.

A very remarkable man whom I met in the United States was Upton Sinclair, who was introduced to me on my first visit.

He was then, as now, an uncompromising Socialist with a charm of manner that greatly impressed me. Later, when I read " The Jungle "—one of the most devastating indictments of Big Business—I regretted that I had not known that he possessed such a fund of wisdom and understanding, for I would have liked to ask him a number of questions.

" The Jungle " had a very real effect upon English opinion in all classes. I remember hearing from a reliable source that, in certain mining districts of England the shopkeepers could no longer sell tinned meat because the miners preferred cheese, having familiarized themselves with the facts contained in that vivid work by Upton Sinclair.

He is a single-minded enthusiast, and I cannot help thinking that in view of certain trusts and business

combines that he has fought, he must have taken his life in his hands more than once. He has been prosecuted and reviled, but he has succeeded in forcing a certain measure of truth upon the world.

After all these years we still correspond, and each time a new book from his pen is to be published I get a welcome note telling me about it, and enriching my shelves with the volume.

Another brilliant writer who devoted his talents to the welfare of the people was Jaurès, the French Socialist, who was assassinated. I met Jaurès, Viviani and Briand some years ago. They were all on the Socialist platform in those days, fighting for the New Republic.

It is interesting to remember that at that time a young man in Italy was editing a Socialist paper, *Avanti*. His name was Mussolini.

Briand had always impressed me with his power as orator. His big head, his flashing eyes, his sweeping gestures were as effective as those of a trained actor. As I listened to him, and realized that he had such men as Jaurès and Viviani as his colleagues, I believed that France would soon become a Socialist State. Jules Guesde was probably the greatest of them all, and he is dead. To-day there are few Socialists in France, and except for Leon Blum, they have little power. If I understand the situation properly, France divides her strength between Republicanism and Communism. Perhaps if Jaurès had lived history would have been written differently. Possibly Briand would not have crossed over to the side of established authority ; Viviani, if he had been spared, might have continued to voice the principles he preached when we all regarded each other as fellow-soldiers in a crusade.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MAINLY FEMININE

Great men and great wives; Catherine Wells; her courage; her roses; Mrs. Bernard Shaw; her husband's health; G.B.S. as Father Christmas; *St. Joan;* Highlanders and the "little people"; the Duke of Argyll; "Johnnie Campbell"; the "Bogle" of the woods; Mull spells; Warwick Castle ghosts; two frightened nurses; brilliant women; Rachel and Margaret McMillan; Deptford Baby Centre; Mrs. Pankhurst; Lady Constance dances barefoot; sun-bathers; snakes; my pet monkeys and the jam; Elinor Glyn; the too-lovely bride; MS. of "Letters of Elizabeth"; Edmund Yates; Mrs. Glyn's two daughters; screen work at Hollywood; the question of dress and fashion; Worth of Paris; Doucet, Poiret, and Caret; Jean Worth and his clients; my Marie Antoinette costume; every gown an advertisement; lingerie; the Parisian *vendeuse;* woman's altered form; Lady de Grey and Madame von Andre; Grand Opera; Jean and Edouard de Reszke; Madame Melba; Lord de Grey; Christie's; Gladys, Lady Ripon; my sister, Millicent Sutherland; the tragedy of her life.

WHEN I think of H. G. Wells I am always reminded how often we seem to read of great men, yet how seldom we read of their wives!

Catherine Wells, the wife of H.G. was the dearest and most splendid of women. A first-class writer, she withdrew herself and her art entirely into the background, so that her husband might shine alone. Her own talent, her charm, her claim to the esteem of his friends, as well as to that of the public, she ignored, devoting herself entirely to him, perfectly happy in the appreciation that he received.

Mrs. Wells's attitude was not due to any demands made by her husband. It was just that she was that sort of woman—happier in the triumph of the beloved

than in her own. Nothing could have prevented her from being unselfish.

We were neighbours, and I saw a good deal of Mrs. Wells. I shall never forget the smiling courage with which she faced approaching death, or her desire that nobody should be made unhappy by the knowledge that she was dying. She would talk of her visitors, her roses, the work in her garden—nothing of herself, except that she was making progress.

In my long life I have never been a great admirer of women, but she inspired an affection that is alive to-day. Brave and selfless Catherine Wells!

Again, we have heard little of the wife of G.B.S. Yet if it had not been for Mrs. Bernard Shaw I doubt whether the great writer would have lived to a ripe age. In the early days of our acquaintance he appeared to me somewhat feeble, physically; now, when he has left youth and the middle years behind him, he seems to be gaining in vigour every day!

This, too, in spite of a "secret sorrow." I pride myself on being the discoverer of that secret sorrow, which is no other than that, while George Bernard Shaw loves to think of himself as resembling Mephistopheles, he has grown so benign-looking that he appears more like Father Christmas!

When Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells come together I imagine that G.B.S. adopts the rôle of any one of the characters he has created—any one who happens to be uppermost in his mind at the moment—to try the effect upon H.G. Sometimes Shaw will be one person, sometimes another. At all events, he is always stimulating, trenchant and supremely witty.

H. G. Wells, on the other hand, is absorbingly interesting in a quieter way. G.B.S. sends up

fire-works, in the light of which many things are revealed. Wells carries aloft a steadily-burning torch, to illumine the Path of Progress.

When *St. Joan* was produced, the two men lunched at Easton, and began a discussion on the play. Wells did not approve of the epilogue, acted by the spirits of the departed, while Shaw declared vehemently that it gave meaning to the whole play. Wells pointed out that if the audience had to wait for an epilogue to explain what had been seen, it was not a good play.

I am not sure that he did object to the epilogue; probably he wanted to hear what Shaw would say to anyone who dared to object.

Speaking of the phantom scene in *St. Joan* reminds me that I have always had a number of Highland friends who firmly believe in the "little people." The belief has none of the formality with which fairy-lore has been invested south of the Tweed.

On one of my visits to Lady Elspeth Campbell and her brother, the Duke of Argyll, the three of us were dining alone on the evening of my arrival.

"I am so glad you saw Johnnie Campbell," Lady Elspeth said after dinner. "He only comes when he likes our guests. If he does not care for them he stays away."

I had to confess that I had not seen anyone, and Lady Elspeth looked disappointed.

"Oh, but you looked up at the gallery several times during dinner, so I thought that was because you saw the Fiddler. He was there the whole time."

My host and hostess talked of him quite casually, as though he had been an ordinary flesh-and-blood visitor instead of the family ghost—they accepted him as a matter of course.

Next morning the Duke took me tramping through the beautiful woods, with the trees for which Inverary is famous. When we returned home, his sister inquired eagerly whether we had met "The Bogle."

"No," said the Duke.

"Oh, dear," exclaimed Lady Elspeth, "I am sorry; how tiresome."

The Bogle might have been some living friend whom they wished to meet; nothing more.

In the beautiful island of Mull, where I sometimes go for a holiday, the same whole-hearted belief prevails. I have been warned more than once not to approach a certain glen, in case I met some old woman who would cast a spell on me. I have gone there many times, however, without having met her.

I have had a few curious experiences though! At Warwick we all see and hear ghosts, but the family feels no alarm whatever. Alas, not everybody views ghosts with the equanimity that we do, and one of our Warwick Castle spirits cost me two excellent nurses when my children were young.

At that time the day and night nurseries were on the top floor. One nurse slept with the children, while the other slept in a room exactly opposite.

The head nurse came to me asking if I would mind telling the night watchman not to make such a noise when he tramped down the corridor.

"He doesn't come till past midnight," she said, "and he makes so much noise that he disturbs the children."

I was perplexed. The nurse was a comparatively new arrival, and knew nothing of the customs of the Castle, or she would have known that the watchman was on duty all night and did not come into the house

at all. I explained this to her, but could not persuade her that she had not heard him. I sent for the man, and he assured me that he never entered the house during his hours of patrol. The nurse was still unconvinced, and told me that the other nurse had heard the watchman too.

" There is a very simple method of putting it to the test," I said. " When you hear him, you can both fling open your doors at the same moment—if it is the man, that will put an end to the trouble."

That night they heard the familiar tramp down the corridor, waited until the footsteps seemed to be just outside their doors, then flung the two doors open.

The sound of steps was still distinctly audible, but the lights fell upon an empty passage.

As they listened and stared they could hear through the open window the steady tramp-tramp of the night watchman on the terrace below—a sound that proved definitely that he could not have been in the corridor at the top of the castle a moment before. Next morning the frightened women gave me notice.

It is a fact that things have occurred at Warwick that I could never explain. In my own private room at the Castle I frequently heard footsteps when there was nobody about, and one evening when I was in my boudoir I heard a strong masculine step moving in the direction of my dressing-room.

Not being a nervous person I rose and followed. The door was open, and the steps were audible now in my bedroom. I passed from the one room into the other, and turned on the light, but there was no sign of any living presence.

There are people who claim that a little old lady

goes about the Castle opening doors, or appearing suddenly where and when she will, but unfortunately I have not seen her.

Most of the men of whom I have written were, at one time or another, greatly sought after in drawing-rooms, and it diverts me, occasionally, to reflect that many of the women who cultivated these celebrities had no real appreciation whatever of their achievements. This is not surprising in view of the fact that education was superficial, and that they were " accomplished " rather than informed. As I look back I see that my youth and early married life were spent in a curiously inconsistent age.

Women were expected to be brilliant socially, yet at the same time it was not considered quite " nice " for them to take part in public life.

Among the women who defied this view in the early days were the two sisters, Rachel and Margaret McMillan. It was they who conceived the great idea of the nursery-outdoor schools which are now becoming so wide-spread, and are giving such splendid training to countless children, as well as releasing their harassed mothers for work.

The sisters realized that in the slums of Deptford, delicate babies stood practically no chance of survival ; they established a centre where these frail little ones might be kept in the open air and fed scientifically. I think their friends fully expected them to come to grief through the hostility of some of the rougher characters of the neighbourhood. But they underestimated the lovable qualities and understanding granted to Rachel and Margaret. Far from rousing antagonism, they were soon well-beloved, and mothers

were only too happy to trust them with the care of their babies.

It was indeed a tragedy that Rachel should have died at such an early stage, when the work planned was barely begun.

Margaret McMillan, however, promised Rachel, on her death-bed, that the work should be carried on, and never was promise more loyally kept.

Since writing these words Margaret McMillan herself, that big-hearted woman, has passed away.

Only a quarter of a century ago any show of independence on the part of a woman caused consternation. This is amusing in light of the fact that a statue has been erected to Mrs. Pankhurst just outside the gates of the House of Commons, which she tried to storm at one time.

I recall the shocked disapproval of society when Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson danced barefoot. Judging by the attitude of some of the great people of the time, one could only suppose that the display of her bare feet by a lady of high degree must inevitably shake the Chancelleries of Europe.

Now we revel in the beauty of the sun-bathers, the bare-legged tennis girls, and the pyjama-clad holiday makers—in short, all the rational, wholesome things that make life sane and pleasant, which polite society would not tolerate in my youth. I do not suppose anybody has seen values change more rapidly than I have done.

Talking of Lady Constance Stewart-Richardson reminds me of an amusing experience I had when staying at Stafford House. Lady Constance had a penchant for snakes, and used to carry them in a basket, or coiled round her neck. When I went to

my room on arrival, the maid said she hoped I did not mind, but Lady Constance had lost one of her snakes, and it was somewhere about in one of these rooms.

I am not really frightened of any living creature; indeed, it is one of my blessings that I have never known the sensation of fear. None the less, snakes do *not* appeal to me. I think they are both unaffectionate and stupid.

Be that as it may, I forgot all about the creature until I learnt next morning that it had spent the night between my mattress and the blanket under the sheet.

I have kept all sorts of strange pets myself, including an ant-bear, and for a long time Easton has had both a bird sanctuary and a monkey-house.

One disastrous afternoon, when I was going out, I let the monkeys into the grounds, not thinking that anybody would call. My neighbour, Sir Walter Gilbey, chose that particular afternoon to pay me a call, bringing with him two beautifully dressed ladies, who were members of his house-party.

Upon hearing that I would soon be back they remained and were served with tea. Unluckily, from the tree tops, the monkeys spied the tea-tray and leapt in through the open window. They stuck their paws into the jam, then, remembering perhaps that they had not greeted my visitors, they began to paw the ladies.

When I arrived I paused on the threshold for an instant, wondering why the two women had bought such vividly red-patterned frocks, and why they should have chosen to dress alike. Then it dawned upon me that my wretched monkeys had plastered their gowns with strawberry jam!

This happened some years later than the snake episode, and they have never called upon me again.

Elinor Glyn has been one of my friends ever since the far-off night when I took a party from Easton Lodge to the Essex Hunt Ball at Harlow. I can remember the sensation created by the arrival, in the unattractive ballroom, of a perfectly lovely girl, with the most wonderfully beautiful red hair I had ever seen, dressed simply in quiet satin, with no jewellery and no make-up. She made the place suddenly brilliant and notable.

Elinor was the young wife of Clayton Glyn, a member of an old Essex county family, and at once she became the belle of a ball that, without her, would have been rather a dismal affair. Middle-aged ladies, who had lost their complexions in the hunting field, stared incredulously, as though nobody had a right to be so pretty as that. I can remember one woman, whose name I will not mention, suggesting that " the young woman " was far too attractive to be respectable. I hope it is not unfair to say that the County regarded such allure as indecorous, and she received the cold shoulder for a while.

But I have always been attracted by beauty, and I found that it was associated with a very simple, artless, generous and kindly nature in the case of Elinor Glyn. I became her friend. Other people might ignore her, but she was present at all my house-parties, and the result was that the ice thawed perceptibly.

One day, how long ago it all seems, Elinor came to me with a packet of MS.

" Will you read this for me," she said, " and tell me if you think there is anything in it ? "

I took the packet, expecting, to tell the truth, to be rather bored. But when I read the " Letters of Elizabeth," I knew that I was to have the credit of discovering a fresh star in the literary firmament. I gave her a note to a cousin (by marriage), the late Mr. Drummond, then acting-editor for Edmund Yates of the *World*, a paper that touched the very centre of fashion. He published the Letters, and they created a sensation, for frank intimacies of their kind were unknown.

When, in later years, Clayton Glyn lost his money and his health, his wife was left to educate her two delightful girls without any resources other than those provided by her own brain. She settled down to steady hard work and made good.

I do not propose to criticize or to praise her gift ; but I do know that she was fighting a lone hand, and if she adapted her powers to the needs of the market, it is very hard to blame her. One knows that she specializes in noblemen, good, bad and indifferent, and that baronets are very dear to her. I always have a certain sense of satisfaction in the thought that I have presented quite a number of them to her, and that each of her charming daughters is the wife of a baronet. They must be very good baronets indeed to be worthy of their prizes, for more simple, unaffected girls would be hard to find.

Although Elinor may be too closely associated with Hollywood nowadays, there is still a great simplicity in her mental make-up. She is a clever gardener, and made a beautiful pleasaunce out of some bare fields in Essex ; while she has an appreciation for things of beauty that neither the screen nor books like " Three Weeks " has vitiated. We do not meet often now,

but ours is the real friendship that can survive absence.

As I look back upon the women of my youth, and compare them with the modern society woman, one of the things that strikes me is the difference in the attitude towards dress. The upper classes are less well dressed, in the sense that their clothes are less individual, and that " creations " and " exclusive designs " have almost gone out of fashion ; while of the middle class I should say that they are infinitely better dressed than in the olden days.

The Mecca of the woman of fashion was Paris, and Worth her prophet. Doucet was established next door, in the rue de la Paix. Poiret had yet to come into the limelight, by giving a display of his wares at No. 10, Downing Street, by invitation of the then Prime Minister's irrepressible wife. How Margot Asquith was attacked for obeying that impulse ! The star of Paul Caret had not risen above the horizon.

The Jean Worth whom I knew, and who was the son of the founder of the firm, was undoubtedly the most distinguished dressmaker in Europe. I can recall him as a man of medium height, with a pointed beard, an ingratiating smile, and the hands of an artist. An artist he was ; he might have become a painter, but it is doubtful in that case whether he would have reaped the large fortune that was his reward for work that undoubtedly imposed a great strain.

He himself met few of his clients ; this honour was reserved for the favoured ones. His courtesy was imperial as he greeted his visitors—his bow magnificent. He would study his subject as a painter would study a woman sitting for her portrait. In silent attendance, his satellites would wait on him,

watchful that not a movement of theirs should disturb his concentration.

Suddenly inspiration would come ! He would call for specially woven brocade from the looms of Lyons, or other rare and costly fabric. Instantly it would appear, and with his wonderful hands he seemed to evoke the powers of Beauty.

" This," he would murmur, " is the colour. This the outline—this—and this——"

With each " this " the gown would grow under the magic of his fingers. He would make us pose, just as Sargent and Carolus Duran and other great painters did when I have sat for them.

Twice I consulted Jean Worth regarding a costume for a fancy-dress ball, when he dressed me as Semiramis for a big affair in Paris, and as Marie Antoinette for the fancy-dress ball at Warwick Castle—the ball which was responsible for awakening me to the activities of Labour, since it aroused the wrath of the *Clarion* and brought me into contact with Robert Blatchford.

In later years I wore the same Marie Antoinette costume at the famous ball at Devonshire House. I could have gone on wearing it, if occasion had arisen, but it perished in the fire at Easton, together with far more valuable treasures. A Worth frock was, of course, very costly. I never had one for which the bill was less than a hundred guineas, and often his gowns were half as much again. But against this, I always set two facts, that they were the creations of a man of genius, and that the materials would never wear out. If it had not been for the fire at Easton, I could have remained an exquisitely dressed woman for the rest of my life, without any expense other than would be incurred by changing the style of a

frock. Curiously enough, I always used to say that nothing but fire could destroy a Worth fabric.

I remember when Jean Worth spoke to me one day :

" You always remark how interested I am in my work. It is true that I am interested in every gown that leaves my *atelier*, and that, madame, is because I realize that I can make my clients work for me."

" How is that ? " I asked idly.

" Every Worth creation must be the advertisement for other Worth creations," he explained. " Every costume has its advertising value."

For day gowns and lingerie one went to Doucet. I had my special saleswoman, or *vendeuse*, at Doucet's, and she knew almost as surely as I did myself just what would please me. I have often wished that our English saleswomen could learn the art of the French *vendeuse*, who is trained to visualize the effect upon you of the clothes she recommends.

In those days Worth and Doucet and other great houses were spurred on to do their work, because they knew that their efforts would be criticized by women of taste and understanding. Since then the *nouveaux riches* have crowded into Paris from all quarters of the globe, and have been content to take anything so long as it was expensive. Naturally they have lowered the standard of style.

To-day another factor has entered into the situation in the altered form of woman, which, owing to sport and other activities, is quite changed, from an artistic point of view. I should imagine it is easier, though perhaps less interesting, to fit. Also straitened means have prevented many women from going to the rue de la Paix as they used, although one can still meet some old friends from London at the Crillon or the Meurice.

Among those who remained faithful to Paris were Lady de Grey and Madame von Andre, two of the best-dressed women in society.

Lady de Grey, who became Marchioness of Ripon, comes back to me vividly now when I see that arrangements are being made to subsidize Grand Opera. From the time of Jean de Reszke right down to the War, Lady de Grey was an operatic subsidy in herself. She was one of the Herberts of Lea, and was married first to Lord Lonsdale, elder brother of the present peer. She came of a cultured family, but once she made a confession to me :

" I began to be interested in music without knowing anything about it. I was never trained, and I could never play."

" What a pity," I remarked.

" Yes, for music is the very breath of my life. Fortunately, of late years, I have had some wonderful teachers."

She referred, I think, to Jean de Reszke, who worshipped her, to Edouard de Reszke, who was almost as devoted, and to Melba, with whom she maintained a steadfast friendship.

I think that Lady de Grey never missed a big performance at the Opera, and her omnibus box was the rendezvous of a number of interesting people.

Her second husband, Lord de Grey, was regarded by many, who should have known better, merely as an especially fine shot and sportsman. He was that, certainly, but he was a great deal more. He was a connoisseur of all things beautiful, and I do not think I have ever stepped into Christie's without seeing him there. He had a sound business head too, and was one of the directors of the Grand Opera Syndicate.

Gladys, as I always called the late Lady Ripon, since that name seems so much more familiar, was one of my friends, who stood up boldly, and I think joyfully, to the strain of knowing one whose views offended all the rulers, all the veterans, and all the sycophants of society.

I think that one of the most attractive figures among the hostesses of my early days was my sister, Millicent Sutherland. Men and women who saw her at Stafford House in the heyday of her youth and fortune might well be excused if they envied her beauty, her natural grace, her great possessions. She was, to all outward seeming, one of the favourites of Providence. The world was at her feet.

Yet, in what must seem to her contemporaries only a few short years, she was fated to lose one husband, to be compelled to divorce another, to suffer the loss of a beloved son, and finally, not very long ago, to face the tragic death of her only daughter, the girl in whom she lived and had her being. It would seem as though no suffering had been spared her.

Thomas Hardy in " The Dynasts " made us acquainted with the Spirit Ironic. Surely that spirit must have presided over my sister's birth, and decided to give her all that was accounted good in the world, merely in order, with grim irony, to take it violently away. Such misfortune seems doubly hard in the case of one who never did or said an unkind thing, and who has given freely of all she is to those who have needed her presence, her sympathy, or her support. Few contemporary lives in the world of my friends and acquaintances have sounded so deep a note of tragedy.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SPORT AND BOHEMIA

The Racing Set; gambling; card-playing for money; people called " creditors "; Newmarket Heath; ideal holiday; early morning ride; no crowd then; all our intimates were present; Ascot and Goodwood; Windsor Forest; a pageant of dress, and chemises; Epsom; the Royal special train; Persimmon's Derby; hunting in my early days; the *Britannia* at Cowes; the sea is not friendly; Mother Earth; flowers and funerals; Lord Desborough; Willie Grenfell and Niagara; Lord Gage and the rats; Lord Grey of Fallodon; W. G. Grace at Easton; Rodin, that great artist; Anatole France; Sargent; why he changed to landscapes; G. F. Watts; old Lady Warwick; Sir Richard Wallace; " La Bagatelle "; the secret panel; Ellen Terry and Henry Irving; Alfred Gilbert; Sarah Bernhardt; Duse and Modjeska; Irving's nervousness; Lily Langtry; beauty and time; Charlie Chaplin; Mary Pickford; H. G. Wells and " The Flood "; the village carpenter.

THOUGH I was for many years in what was known as the " Racing Set," I never made a real bet in my life, and never wished to do so.

Gambling has not interested me, and though there was a season when I did play cards for money, it was always in order to oblige my friends. I played with a supreme indifference as to the result and a complete lack of concern in the process.

In spite of the unwisdom of such an attitude, I have never been able to take money seriously. As a means to an end, it serves good purposes. It is necessary in order to satisfy people called creditors, a class with which we appear to be over-populated. But if you suggest that there can be any real interest in money as money, I remain unconvinced.

Money is something I have never been able to keep —nay, I might go further still, and say that I never

had any desire to keep it. Who was it said : " What I spent I had, what I saved I lost, what I gave I saved " —or words to that effect ? The philosophy appeals to me.

It follows, then, that the pleasure of backing a winner is something that has passed me by. Such enjoyment as I derived from the race-course was founded very largely upon the conditions that obtained when I first knew it, in that delightful season of life when enthusiasms of every kind are the order of the hour.

Take Newmarket Heath, for example—there was no more delightful place for a holiday. We went again and again to the Summer and Autumn Meetings. We used to stay in one of the small houses round the Heath, generally with friends, though occasionally we rented one for ourselves.

Life was simple, pleasant and unadorned in Cambridgeshire in those days. One rose early and rode out in the brisk morning air, in order to see the horses at exercise. Then we came home to breakfast—a jolly, social meal—and later on changed, but always into country clothes, and, in due course, went to see the races.

At the Summer Meeting there would be picnic lunches in marquees. Where the Grand Stand dominates the countryside to-day there was then a pleasant wood, where, in July, one could enjoy an alfresco meal and a quiet ramble with a friend.

For the Cambridgeshire and the Cesarewitch there were considerable stands, and a sufficiently ample gathering to secure excitement, coupled with the sense of great happenings. Still, it was possible to go about the Heath on horseback, and, in fact, we

were seldom out of the saddle when we went to the races.

There was no crowd in the modern sense of the term. Remembering the absence of motor-cars, the infrequency of trains, the comparatively small attendance is easy to explain. Who can defend the overcrowded social gathering, whether it is race meeting, dance, or political reception ?

At Newmarket there was a set with which one was on the best of terms. All our intimates appeared to be either patrons or real lovers of the turf. The group included Henry Chaplin and Lord and Lady Bradford—the last-named and her sister, Lady Chesterfield, were the two ladies to whom Lord Beaconsfield was so devoted. Others always in evidence were the Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Hartington ; Lord and Lady Cadogan, whose entertainments at Chelsea House were part of the pleasures of the London Season ; Lord Derby, always a sportsman, accompanied by most of the considerable Stanley family ; the old Duke of St. Albans, who married the daughter of that sometime wit of the House of Commons, Bernal Osborne, and Lord Falmouth.

The Prince of Wales never missed Newmarket, and would frequently ride out with the rest of us in the morning to see the horses exercised. Generally he drove to the meetings.

I am not good enough at descriptive writing to tell of the pleasure of these delightfully informal gatherings, where one was surrounded by one's best friends, the best horses and the best jockeys, and everybody could enjoy the most pleasurable anticipations, even though some of them were not to be realized. Although

I could not bring myself to be interested in the question of which horse passed the judge first, I could find all the stimulus I needed in the movement, the glitter, the skill, and, of course, the beauty of the animals themselves.

For racing I preferred Newmarket all the time. Ascot bored me to tears. There was only one redeeming feature about those stilted, expensive, extensive and over-elaborate garden parties that made up Ascot, and lasted for four days on end. This was the evening ride in Windsor Forest ; the special gowns had been laid aside and the tiresome business of strutting in the Enclosure was over for the day.

We were all united in agreeing that the evening ride was a thing with which we could not have dispensed without a real sense of loss. Even the losers —and everybody loses money at Ascot—agreed about this.

I think the Ascot meeting has little more than its season and its natural surroundings to recommend it, particularly in these days of mass attendance. It has always been a pageant of dress, and it is pleasant to think that flowing chiffons are being worn again in the Enclosure. It is so awkward to meet one's friends in their chemises.

I went to Goodwood on one occasion only, and did not care about it at all ; indeed, I never accepted another invitation for the week.

I used to go to Epsom, but chiefly, I think, because the Prince of Wales used to give me a Jockey Club ticket, which admitted me to the club premises, and I was also invited to travel down on the " Royal special." This meant that I reached the course without overcrowding or annoyance of any kind. I

remember seeing Persimmon win the great race, amid extraordinary enthusiasm.

I kept in touch with racing long enough to see the great changes that came with the ever-growing big business in betting. I cannot pretend that they are an improvement.

I have had a few horses in training in my time, but always on a very modest and insignificant scale, and I was never enthusiastic about them as race-horses. To me nothing really matters except the horses themselves, and no day passes in my country home without a visit to the stables, where a few old favourites look for my coming. Whether they would be as pleased to see me if I did not carry carrots, sugar, bread and other luxuries is a question I have never paused to ask.

For many years I used to ride regularly in the Easton Woods. The jaunt was not only very pleasant, but it enabled me to satisfy myself that no snaring was practised in disobedience to my strict injunctions. I took my dogs with me, and if there had been any snares I should have been certain to discover them.

Naturally enough, I hunted in the early days, because I started riding when a five-year-old child and I remained in the hunting field until my tastes changed. In my young days those who rode were taught to hunt, just as those who had good voices were taught to sing.

In the Leicestershire country I followed the Quorn, Pytchley, Cottesmore and Mr. Fernie's ; but I think that some of my best hunting, or at least my most exciting, was in Ireland, with the Meath and the celebrated Ward stag-hounds. I used to go over to

Ireland specially for the hunting, and was often a guest at the Viceregal Lodge. My first stay there came shortly after I was married, when our host and hostess were the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, the parents of Lord Randolph Churchill. How far away it all seems !

On the *Britannia* at Cowes I have taken such part as a visitor may in the racing ; but yachting never held any appeal for me, partly because there is an antipathy between the sea and myself that expresses itself most unpleasantly. I have crossed the Atlantic, but even the memories of the hospitality I received on the Far side, and the thought of the kind friends who made me welcome and urged me to come back again, cannot drown the memory of many waters, all too unpleasantly insistent day after day for what seemed an eternity.

I envy no seaman the water, no aviator the air. They may live on the one or in the other, and I will not seek to intrude. Mother Earth is good enough for me, and when my time comes I ask for nothing better than that my mortal remains be consigned to it with a minimum of ceremony. I have no conventional horror of the great kindly Mother of us all, no dread of the corruption and decay of a body from which I have parted company. It is the law of Nature—why, then, seek to condemn it ? Nature is never wrong. This view explains why I have never been able to give support to the people who clamour for cremation.

The only modern movement that I do approve of in connexion with funeral ceremonies is the tendency to abolish the floral wreath, and to reduce to a minimum the externals of mourning. To take flowers in their

beauty, twist and turn them to a formal pattern, leaving them to die forgotten on the ground, seems to me a practice devoid of grace and of utility.

> " Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
> Or flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death ? "

Whom do our memorial wreaths flatter ? Not the dead, surely, for they have passed beyond the reach of the world and its offerings. Why should the living be flattered at a moment when they would do well to remind themselves of their own mortality ? I said to a friend the other day, on the occasion of a funeral at which the wreaths were both costly and superabundant, " Remember, if you are alive when my time comes, no wreath in any circumstances. You know my feelings in the matter ; I trust you not to outrage them."

" I would not think of sending one," he replied. " If I survive you, I will send a subscription to a Dogs' Home or a Home of Rest for Horses, and I will do it in memory of our friendship, in the certain knowledge that I shall be pleasing you."

I could ask for no more agreeable tribute.

I have wandered a long way from the race-course to the cemetery, but when I come to think of it, the race-course, as I knew it, together with the horses that raced and the sportsmen who looked on and made the meetings memorable, have all gone their way. People, horses and buildings they would not recognize have replaced all they would look for if they were able to return.

I have known many sportsmen, but of them all I admire Lord Desborough most. He has done everything possible to encourage a love of every wholesome

form of outdoor exercise. No one has done more to toughen the fibre and sinew of two generations.

I remember the glamour that surrounded him when, as the famous Willie Grenfell, he swam Niagara twice. The whole nation mourned with him when he lost his splendid sons. He has had many troubles, but he has faced them as he has faced everything else—courageously, and with the most admirable self-control.

His daughter's choice of Lord Gage for a husband reminded me that either the father or grandfather of the present peer—I am not sure which—was my husband's next-room neighbour at Christ Church.

I remember my husband telling me how the young fellow suffered at the hands of practical jokers. On one occasion, when Lord Brooke, as he was then, was in his rooms with Walter Long, they heard frenzied cries for help from Lord Gage. They rushed into his room, and found it filled with rats, that had obviously been brought there in cages and let loose during the young man's absence.

It was a cruel and dangerous joke, and I believe that our sense of humour must be in process of becoming civilized, for I doubt whether anybody over the age of seven would consider such a thing amusing to-day.

In his love for wild birds, Lord Desborough resembles that other great naturalist, Lord Grey of Fallodon. To those who know the gentle ascetic nature of Lord Grey, it is quaint to hear responsibility for the War placed at his door. Personally, I have always felt that he should never have touched practical politics, but should have remained what he has always been at heart—a naturalist, with a highly developed sense of beauty. This could have been satisfied

without more easily than *within* the Houses of Parliament.

Another sportsman that I knew, but of an altogether different calibre, was W. G. Grace.

As a young man, my son Guy was very keen on cricket, and in order to please him we used to have cricket weeks at Easton, during which we entertained large numbers of visitors. We used to put up at least two teams in the house, spread a big luncheon tent, and invite the County to see the play. Various teams of the Guards, the I Zingari, and other well-known elevens would play on the ground. One summer, to the great delight and excitement of my son, W. G. Grace accepted an invitation to come to Easton.

I remember being photographed with the great cricketer by the side of the pavilion, and I should have liked to reproduce that picture, knowing how interesting a figure is the famous " W.G." But I am unable to find it, and must assume that it was destroyed in the unfortunate fire.

He was a genial, simple man, very kind-hearted, and one of his modest traits was his generous appreciation of other players. He was interested in everything, which was not surprising, for disciplined games played regularly seem to quicken the brain. That is one of the reasons why I am most eager to see a sufficiency of playing fields established everywhere for children of all ages.

William Gilbert Grace gave me the impression of being surprised at his own popularity. He knew, of course, that he played a good game of cricket, but I do not think he ever quite understood why he should be a national hero on that account.

Changing from Sport to Bohemia, I may say that I knew Rodin, that greatest of artists, who remained to the day of his death, simple, unaffected, and, in some ways, strangely touching. Success meant little to him, possibly because it came when he was too old to enjoy it.

Occasionally he would attend social affairs, but when he did so, he appeared—at all events to me—a lonely soul, and I felt that the interchange of conversation meant very little to him. Although he was always most courteous, I had the feeling that he was saying to himself, " What have all these people to do with me ? Why have I been brought here ? " He was lionized, but I doubt whether he realized it. At parties, I am sure that he must often have looked round for the guest of honour, not appreciating that it was himself.

I remember well, many years ago, at Rodin's studio in the rue de l'Université, Anatole France, the famous author, asked Rodin whether he had ever experienced complete happiness.

" Never," said Rodin sadly.

" I have experienced pleasure," Anatole France continued, " but I do not think that happiness is within the reach of mortal man."

I sat there and wondered then, as I wonder now, whether any man or woman that I have met has ever known complete happiness. The late Lord Astor, writing to me a little while before his death, said, " I am getting on in years now, and looking back over life, I can say that I have had everything I sought to gain, and done everything I set out to do."

I recalled those two men, Rodin and Anatole France, and wondered mightily.

Sargent painted a portrait of me, but towards the end of his too-short life he gave up portrait painting altogether, because he was afraid of prostituting his art by painting people who were of no artistic interest to him. Numbers of women, who did not care at all about Art, would offer him any amount of money to paint their portraits.

He could not bring himself to do this, and he realized that, in view of his fame, to paint some and refuse others would cause resentment. Therefore he ended his life as a landscape painter.

" I must have a type to paint," he told me one day, " a type that expresses a phase of humanity. I cannot do a face simply because it happens to belong to somebody who has money to spend."

Another great artist that I met was G. F. Watts when he was staying at Warwick Castle, before my father-in-law's death. He was a great friend of the family in those days.

I remember that old Lord Warwick sat to G. F. Watts, and while he was painting the portrait Lady Warwick, who was an artist of great attainment, took advantage of the occasion to paint her own portrait of her husband.

I know that she found it extraordinarily interesting to work at the same subject as the great painter, yet to maintain her own ideas and keep to her own method.

I do not pretend to be an art critic, but I cannot help feeling that my mother-in-law made the more convincing portrait. Hers was indeed a speaking likeness, and it hangs now at Easton where I write. The Watts portrait is at Warwick Castle.

I understand that Mr. Watts himself admired my mother-in-law's study of her husband.

Talking of the arts, recalls a very peculiar character —Sir Richard Wallace, who gave the Wallace Collection to the Nation.

My husband once told me an extraordinary story about him. Despite the fact that he had a beautiful home, " Bagatelle," near Paris, and, so far as one could tell, every reason to be happy, he became a misogynist.

My husband was visiting Paris, and thought he would like to see his old friend, so he wrote to his secretary asking if an appointment could be made. In reply he received a letter saying that Sir Richard would be delighted if my husband would lunch with him on a date that he named, and still more pleased if he would bring with him Mesdemoiselles X and Y, who at that time were the stars in the Paris theatres.

My husband knew the two ladies, so he passed on the invitation, which was accepted eagerly. On the day of the luncheon, my husband and the two ladies drove to " Bagatelle," where they were received by the butler, who expressed Sir Richard's regrets that he was unable to welcome them personally, as his health was giving him great trouble. He added, however, that Sir Richard begged that they would do him the honour of enjoying the lunch that had been specially prepared for them.

During the meal, which was served in a small room like a study, something drew my husband's attention to a panel in the wall. As he was looking at it, the panel was silently drawn back, and, to his astonishment, he saw Sir Richard's face appear ! Sir Richard caught my husband's eye but gave no sign of recognition. Instead, he continued to stare fixedly at his guests !

Realizing what a shock it would be to the ladies to find their host staring at them through a secret opening

in the wall, my husband used his unfailing tact to rivet their attention to something on the table.

A few moments later the panel was closed as soundlessly as it had opened. After lunch my husband and his guests left " Bagatelle " without having exchanged a word with their host.

Lord Warwick never saw him again, because Sir Richard's strange and eventful life came to a close a short while afterwards.

I always turn with pleasure to my recollections of the agreeable *milieu* created by some of my theatrical friends, among whom were Ellen Terry and Henry Irving.

Sometimes Ellen Terry would come to our Barn Theatre, in the Park at Easton, and recite. On one memorable occasion she played the rôle of Hubert in *King John*, and on another equally unforgettable night she took part in a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Alfred Gilbert, the famous sculptor, has fashioned a beautiful tablet to Ellen's memory, which is now in our village church. But to those who heard her on the stage, her most enduring memorial will be the recollection of her golden voice.

I know that it is Sarah Bernhardt, whom I saw act in Paris and in London, and who stayed with us at Warwick, who is always spoken of as the woman with the golden voice. But marvellous as it was—and with the three simple words, " *Je t'aime*," she could touch the people's very heart-strings—I think myself that Ellen Terry's voice comes first for sheer music.

I see that I have written " comes first " instead of " came first " ; it is so difficult to realize that people who have formed a part of one's life are no longer with us.

Duse was as great as Bernhardt, and greater than Ellen Terry, but she lacked Ellen's singularly winning charm. Yet she must have had wonderful power, for Duse held her audience spell-bound.

Madame Modjeska was another of these marvellous women; it is said of her that she could repeat the multiplication table in such thrilling tones that she moved her audience to tears. She was a very beautiful woman.

I recall Ellen Terry telling me how painfully overstrung were Sir Henry Irving's nerves, and how she cured him. He had the habit, it appeared, of standing in the wings and watching until he was given his cue to go on the stage. While he was waiting, he would die a thousand deaths!

"If you will do as I tell you, I will cure you," Ellen said to him.

"I wish to Heaven you could, Nellie," responded Irving fervently.

"Very well," she said, "the cure is quite simple, and consists of your going into your dressing-room, and staying there until the call-boy knocks."

"No, no," cried he restlessly, "I must see what is going on, and watch what is happening on the stage."

"That is just what you must not do," replied Ellen. "If you do that, you won't be able to act at all. As it is, you suffer a great deal during the first few minutes when you go on."

"I can't do what you suggest," Irving protested.

But nobody could resist Ellen if she wished to persuade, and in a few minutes she had won the great actor's promise, which was kept faithfully.

Irving never suffered from nerves again. Once he was induced to refrain from watching the other actors

on the stage until he was actually among them, his nervousness left him. From the moment he stepped upon the boards, he was complete master of himself.

An interesting woman who joined the theatrical profession was Lily Langtry. Lady de Bathe was certainly one of the loveliest creatures I have ever seen. I have often remembered a conversation that we had as we strolled through the gardens at Easton one summer evening during the War.

"Whatever happens, I do not intend to grow old!" exclaimed Lily Langtry suddenly, and with these words I saw a flash of her beautiful eyes. "Why shouldn't beauty vanquish time?"

I forget what I answered, for I was busy analysing what she had said. I stole a glance at her, and certainly Time's ravages, although perceptible to the discerning eye of one who had known her at the zenith of her beauty, were disguised with consummate artistry, while her figure was still lovely.

But it came to me then that there was tragedy in the life of this woman, whose beauty had once been world-famous, for she had found no time in the intervals of pursuing pleasure to secure contentment for the evening of her day. Now that she saw the evening approach, Lily Langtry could only protest that it was not evening at all, but just the prolongation of a day that was, in truth, already dead.

I was oddly reminded of Lady Londonderry, for the Jersey Lily clung to her beauty even when it was passing, just as passionately as Theresa had clung to the ideas that had dominated her world in the days of her youth. Just as the political world in which the one woman moved was slipping from her grasp in her declining years, so was the world of easy

triumphs slipping away from the other. It was curiously interesting to compare two women of such opposite types, yet be compelled to recognize that the same mental processes had taken place in each.

The explanation, I think, was that during her declining years each woman lived in the past, just as formerly each had lived entirely in the present, and especially for the moment.

Personally, I do not mind the passing of time so long as my mind permits me to retain the youthful habit of living in the future. But only those who know intellectual activity can live in the future, and thus become indifferent to age. I have found that life becomes increasingly interesting the more I identify myself with worth-while causes, and the less I think about personal matters and my own age.

As I strolled along the garden paths with the Jersey Lily I was deeply sorry for her, realizing as I did that she had no resources within herself and was living on memories—for memories do not carry one forward, and inevitably one reaches a period when one has exhausted them.

It is strange how many people who ought to be happy, and who possess a great deal to make them so, seem to miss the sunshine of life.

As I write, the papers are full of Charlie Chaplin and his latest film. Returning to England for a little while, he received the kind of welcome generally reserved for Prime Ministers and foreign potentates. It is the extraordinary tribute of a country that is, at heart, democratic to an outstanding artiste. The papers have turned my memory to the actor's last stay in the country, when he was my guest at dinner at Easton. From *City Lights* to country nights!

He was staying half a mile away, with H. G. Wells at "The Glebe," and I have had the privilege of seeing Charlie Chaplin in two aspects. The first was perhaps the more interesting.

He came with Mr. and Mrs. Wells; we became friendly very quickly, and he opened his heart to me.

"If I'd had my will," he said, "I would have been a tragedian, for I feel the pity and tragedy of life so intensely. You cannot imagine what it meant to me to wake up, day after day, and remember that before bedtime I must have devised some fresh buffoonery to make folk laugh. It is the one fly in the ointment, and, at times, it robs my success of its savour."

"You have nothing really to complain about," I replied, "because you should surely realize, when you look at the films you make, that you can strike the tragic note at will. After all, the world asks laughter—it has plenty of tears without hunting for them."

I am afraid he refused to be consoled.

"There is Mary—Mary Pickford," he went on, "a born actress. Sometimes I think that the parts she has been compelled to play on the screen, although she has done so much justice to them, do no real justice to her. I've never in my life met anyone who was so finished an artiste. The screen does impose its limitations upon us all."

One evening, after dinner at H. G. Wells's house, I saw Charlie Chaplin as most of us know him. There were charades, those inevitable charades in which all visitors, no matter how old or how distinguished, were compelled to play their part when at "The Glebe."

On this occasion "The Flood" was the subject of the charade. H.G.'s eldest son G.P. was perched on the top of the book-shelves, distinguished in a

long beard, to represent the Deity. Charlie Chaplin was Noah, and when he came out of the impromptu Ark his antics with his umbrella were absolutely irresistible. Those quick movements to see whether the rain was at an end, and the umbrella could be laid aside—I shall never forget them! How we seemed to forget that there was anything but laughter in the world!

Charades at "The Glebe," in those days, must have been devastating to poor Catherine Wells's wardrobe. The demand for hats and clothes was only equalled by the indifferent treatment that was meted out to them. So far as the furniture was concerned, it was a customary thing for the village carpenter—a very skilled and clever carpenter too—to call on the morning after charades and take away pieces of furniture for prompt repair.

"The Glebe" has very pleasant tenants to-day, but I cannot pass the house without remembering those wonderful days and nights of the Wells regime, and the unfailing charm of Catherine Wells, who was one of the most complete hostesses I have ever met.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BOOKS AND THE PRESS

Single-minded men; Stanley Baldwin; Lord Irwin; Sir Oliver Lodge; Walter Rathenau; London's East-end; German labour conditions; Vernon Hartshorn and Stephen Walsh; plight of the worker-leader; Philip Snowden; influence of books; I act as Poor Law Guardian; make your own mistakes; Scott, Dickens and Thackeray; "Story of an African Farm"; Edward Bellamy and "Looking Backward"; Robert Blatchford's "Merrie England"; not a lover of poetry; W. H. Hudson; modern philosophers and psycho-analysts; Memoirs; honest criticism needed to-day; the Press and social life; Prince of Wales and a wider society; the Press photographer; Mr. Buckle of *The Times*; Sir Donald Wallace; Lord Salisbury's articles for the *Saturday Review*; Lord Glenesk; Lord Burnham of the *Daily Telegraph*; the chorus girl's photograph; Statesmen depend upon the Press; Frederick Greenwood; Temperance reformers; abuse of alcohol; modern girls and night-clubs; the New Club and the actresses; Kate Vaughan; Connie Gilchrist; "Skittles"; strict etiquette for girls when we went to Holyrood; love for our homes; James Brown, High Commissioner for Scotland; Holyrood modernized; lost in Windsor Castle; the wrong bedroom.

A CONVERSATION at dinner one night brought up a difficult question. I was asked who were the most single-minded men I had met. Various names were suggested, including a number of statesmen I have known intimately, but to my regret I could not find among them any one man of whom I could say, "Here is one whose character as a public man is without blemish." The taint of self was upon them all.

Oddly enough, the one man whose life has convinced me of his real worth is one I have never met. I refer to Stanley Baldwin. I cannot measure his capacity, even for purposes of comparison; but I do know a good deal of his life from his political friends and his

political opponents, and I believe him to be one of our national assets. He and Ramsay MacDonald have much in common, and neither has reason to be ashamed of the fact, even though their respect for one another may offend the popular Press.

Lord Irwin, formerly Edward Wood, is a Yorkshireman who stands on the same high level of moral purpose and disinterested action. He has been the intimate friend of one of my children and of my grandson.

Side by side with these I place Sir Oliver Lodge, while the fourth among the men who have inspired my respectful admiration is the late Walter Rathenau —that great German-Jewish capitalist who at heart was a lover of the workers, and one of the clearest thinkers of his time. If his counsels had prevailed in the years immediately after the War, the European position would undoubtedly have been far less strained.

The most valuable men to the State to-day are those big employers of labour who have a keen sense of responsibility. I have referred in a later chapter to the late Lord Melchett in this connexion; England needed him as Germany needed Rathenau.

Walter Rathenau was a man of fine calibre and strange sensitiveness. I remember when he told me of a visit he paid to some works in the East-end of London. When he began to describe what he had seen, he became extraordinarily agitated. I am writing now of the years before the War.

" That a country like yours, Lady Warwick," he said, " should be capable of treating men and women as it does, is utterly astonishing to me. If I, or my brother industrialists, did as your Capitalists can do here, we should find ourselves very speedily on the

wrong side of prison bars, and we should be held up to execration."

I asked him what he meant—what had he discovered ?

" I went to ——— Works yesterday," he explained, " and found men at work in sheds that were so badly roofed that the rain was coming through them. These men were dressed in their ordinary clothes only, and some were being soaked to the skin. They had to pass from the wet sheds to the furnaces. They were exposed to every extreme of heat and cold, and the danger to their health must be immense. If our great combine housed men in this fashion, the directors would go to gaol, and no one would pity them."

He went on to tell me of the arrangements made at the works of the Allgemeine Elektricitäts Gesellschaft for the comfort of the workmen. Every man had his locker and his overalls. Every man's dinner was fetched from his house in a locked metal dish, which, after being washed, was taken back to his house by the vans of the company. If necessary, the meal was cooked in the factory oven.

When work was over for the day, the workers had access to hot baths, and they were allowed time every morning to change into overalls before they went on duty. There were clubs of all kinds—for games, sickness, amusement, education, and even burial. If I remember rightly, the staff employed numbered sixty thousand workers.

Walter Rathenau told me that, in his younger days, when he was going into the business that his father had established and built up, the co-directors were not friendly to the suggestion—they did not want to create a dynasty, they said. So he went into finance instead,

made a fortune, then, his abilities proven, found himself welcome. Rathenau was dominated by his civic sense. Money was for him no more than a means to do good work, and he took a pride in the comfort of those who worked for him.

I have already referred to Sir Oliver Lodge's generosity in giving priceless discoveries to the world, claiming neither recognition nor return; while Mr. Baldwin's character has been recognized by those who have stood up for him, and against his assailants, without regard to political considerations.

These men of character are all fortunate in their degree. Although Rathenau was assassinated, his work speaks for him and his ideals have inspired many of his countrymen. There are other men who have worked with an equal singleness of purpose, but have been condemned to comparative obscurity. Take the case of Labour Ministers like Vernon Hartshorn and Stephen Walsh. Both died before their time, stricken down in the midst of labours they would not abandon. The tragedy of the Labour party in the world of government is known only to those who have learned to look with a sympathetic eye upon the events of long years past.

One hears every day, and in all places, that Labour has failed because the representatives of the party have not the vigour, the capacity, or the virility of their opponents.

Nobody has paused to ask how they could possibly have acquired them. At the age of six, Will Thorne was working in the brickfields. At the age of eight, my friend Harry Snell, who has now gone to the House of Lords, was working on a farm. These men, whose business it has been to open the eyes of the

blind and improve the plight of the worker, have had in the first instance to fight their way through the Trade Union movement, and, while carrying on the endless tasks this work entailed, to educate themselves. Then, at last, they have forced their way, under tremendous pressure, to the House of Commons, and from the House of Commons to office.

By the time they reach responsible office, they have done more than one man's life-work. They fall at their posts, and that is the end. Until the conditions of education are improved, Labour can only send overworked, overstrained men to speak for her before the people.

On the other hand, the opponents of Labour, the leisured classes, are in infinitely better case. While the Labour leader is toiling in straitened circumstances, perhaps without sufficient food, in the mine, the factory, or the field, the lad brought up in comfortable circumstances is at a public school. He goes to the university, his health and his physique being always a matter of the first importance. He reaches the House of Commons without a struggle, and if he has the necessary gifts, he can rise to office, healthy and sound, while his opponents are already worn to a frazzle by the hardships of their lives.

You will notice in the Labour party that many die, but hardly anybody is ill—Philip Snowden is an outstanding exception. In other words, they keep on to the very last. I cannot help thinking that, given the right conditions, there would be just as many men distinguished for singleness of purpose in the ranks of Labour as among those who are now more happily circumstanced. There are so many of the Labour rank-and-file who have given all they have, and all

they are, to the great and lasting service. They pass unregarded and unknown save by their fellow toilers ; but the work goes on, and the work is their monument.

I sat with a friend in his library quite recently, and he turned from his crowded and well-beloved book-shelves :

" What books have influenced you ? " he asked. " How far have they made your views or moulded your character ? "

He was a little startled when I told him quite truthfully that I had never been influenced by books, and went on to say that nobody had influenced me. This is the truth. Men and women who have tried to influence my life have failed. Sometimes they have been annoyed, and where those who are living fail, a book can hardly succeed. It is only on very rare occasions that an author's personality dominates his readers through his pages.

This may seem to be inconsistent with the statement made elsewhere that Robert Blatchford made a Socialist of me. But it was not his work or his influence : it was his direction. He sprang economics upon one who did not know that such a science existed. I reacted to the shock, so that he wrought better than he knew.

W. T. Stead again, without exerting or seeking to exert any influence, enlarged my interests in public work, and urged me to take some public place, however modest, in order that I might get into touch with actualities and cease to traffic in mere theories. He pointed out the danger of inexperience. It was through him that I became a Poor Law Guardian for nine years, and with the co-operation of some progressive

women, succeeded in a good many endeavours. I still contrive to touch public life here and there.

I have always felt that it is better to make your own mistakes than to accept guidance or direction from others. I hold that we must be strong to love and to hate, if we would make an effective mark upon our time and bring aid that is worth the bringing to great principles and struggling causes. Everything worth having should be worth fighting for. Though I hate war, I am not at heart a pacifist. I hate injustice, tyranny and cruelty, and my hatred embraces all those who practise them. My hatred is a real force, of which I am in no wise ashamed. Oliver Cromwell's blood is in my veins.

Where books are concerned, I plead guilty to a little conservatism. I started my reading life on a carefully selected diet of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray, and confess without shame that I can read these masters still, with an interest that neither familiarity nor the passing of the years can diminish. Their genius, authentic and indisputable, has survived their century, and they have found no rivals.

The other books that have interested me most are those that support my own views. Olive Schreiner's " Story of an African Farm " held me as nothing else of hers held me, though I am willing to admit her unrivalled eloquence and sincerity. Her first big book was the fruit of budding genius. Edward Bellamy's " Looking Backward " explained and satisfied. It stimulated my eagerness to work for the great cause that in a way swallowed up my life. Robert Blatchford's " Merrie England " was a joy to me, as it has been to tens of thousands of others—I can read it still and respond to its vision and sincerity.

William Morris appealed with his " News from Nowhere " and " A Dream of John Bull." I never was a great lover of poetry, so his works in that field passed me by. I have loved the " Green Mansions " of W. H. Hudson, and the " Tess " of Thomas Hardy, better than any other works. I could never tackle either George Meredith or Henry James, those masters of eloquence but tiresome verbiage. It is not for me to criticize the quality of their works ; all I have to say is that nothing either of them wrote has appealed to me, with the exception of the " Altar of the Dead " —to me the most comprehensible of all Henry James's books. I often wonder whether he regretted such an indiscreet excursion into the realm of plain speaking.

The modern philosophers, Proust, Keyserling, Benedetto Croce, to say nothing of the psycho-analysts, Freud, Jung, and their fellows, do not appeal to me. Memoirs I have always suspected, even while writing them—by request, I must say, by way of explanation and excuse. No writer of memoirs can lay bare his real heart ; what he says will never be a complete expression of his thoughts, for he will never be able to avoid indulging in reservations. Many have tried, but who has succeeded ? Even Marie Bashkirtseff appeared to me to be posing.

The best book of the kind that has come my way is Dr. Axel Munthe's story of " San Michele." Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and their circle, I read for amusement, admiring their cleverness. Any book that creates a momentary stir is likely to pass through my hands, because I have learned to read very rapidly. But how seldom does one find the thought that compels, or the laughter that lingers; how often does an

unpleasant personality, an unconscious self-revelation, give us a flash-light glimpse of something from which the author would have recoiled if he had but known what he was doing ?

But looking at literature, English, French and German, in the light of the little I know about it, I may say again that it has never exercised sufficient force in my life to enable me to say that I have been influenced by the writer. I have been interested, informed, enlightened—even disgusted, if you like—but the idea that I should change my views in response to a book is utterly foreign to my make-up.

In passing, I may say how much I object to the modern custom of hailing every fresh volume as a work of genius. It would be a relief to learn from some honest reviewer that certain books were frankly unreadable. Such information would have saved a great deal of time, and I might have come, in the course of years, to be influenced by book reviewers if not by the books themselves.

I have read of times where criticism was pointed, virile and pungent, when it was quick to praise the good, and equally ready to condemn the rest. What has happened to rob our generation of its rights in this respect ? Is it good manners carried to excess, or a careful regard for publishers' feelings ? Or have we really become mealy-mouthed, because we shrink from the actualities of life ?

In the old days, when the Press was suspect in the houses of the great, its association with the social life of London was as infrequent as it is with the *vie intime* of Paris to this day. If society had remained as it was in the mid-Victorian times in which I was born the general public would have known very little

of its concerns, but there were certain forces at work to change the old order of things.

In the first instance, the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward, opened circles that had been closed hitherto, by introducing representatives of racing and finance. As time went on, this involved the addition of a considerable number of people whose chief claim to attention was their bank balance. Not unnaturally these people wished to assert themselves ; they wished to appear as an integral part of the world into which they had entered, and it was to their entertainments that the Press was invited, and in due course, the photographer. As soon as the term " Marlborough House Set " became popular, publicity followed.

Leading politicians, even the most conservative among them, were compelled to recognize the political importance of the Press ; but they met the problem by limiting their confidence to a select group of papers, and their personal intercourse to a very small number of journalists of distinction.

When the Prince of Wales stayed at Easton, we invited at his request Mr. Buckle, editor of *The Times*, a most agreeable man, and Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, that living encyclopædia. As Prince and Monarch, King Edward liked to keep in touch with men who were really well-informed.

The late Lord Salisbury wrote a number of articles on foreign policy for the *Saturday Review*, under the editorship, I think, of Mr. Cook, then of Mr. W. H. Pollock. He was on friendly terms with the proprietors of the *Standard*, as well as *The Times*.

Sir Algernon Borthwick, afterwards Lord Glenesk, was a power in the land through his ownership of the *Morning Post*. Lord Burnham of the *Daily Telegraph*

was another friend of King Edward, and was very often his host, for the shooting at Hall Barn, near Beaconsfield, was of more than ordinary excellence.

But there was very little social recognition of newspapers as newspapers, and the old hostesses of the Tory party would no more have invited representatives to their balls and receptions than burglars. I think they would have put the one class of intruder on a par with the other. They regarded privacy as their special privilege, and it formed a part of their social assets. What they did and thought concerned nobody but themselves. They lived outside the world of printed opinion, and the attentions of the newer and more pushing papers, whether daily or weekly, were resented.

" Just imagine," remarked a very exclusive *grande dame* to me one day, when we were talking on this subject, " I found a portrait of my niece on one page, and opposite to her was the chorus girl whom that fool ——— is going to marry! Why should one rub shoulders with a creature like that, even in a weekly paper ? What are we coming to ? "

I was unable to answer the question. To be truthful, it did not seem to be of sufficient importance to worry about, but I quote the remark because it is typical of a certain resentment that the older section of society has always felt towards the Fourth Estate. So far did resentment go, that, when a few years ago, a clever society woman was asked by a leading newspaper to send sketches and gossip from the hunting field, she was speedily compelled to choose between her friends and her job. She resigned the appointment!

Some of the big newspapers have a Social Correspondent, a man or woman whose business it is to

attend as many functions as possible, and to say who was there, and, in the case of women, what they wore. I can imagine a no more deplorable job than this. While it explains, without justifying, the gibe that some of our papers are written for flunkeys by flunkeys, it certainly testifies to the curious interest that so many people take in the circumstances of those who are better off than themselves.

I am inclined to hold that there should be still closer association with the newspapers, in order to correct false impressions. I think that each class has a good deal to learn from the other. At present, the general public takes it for granted that those who are born to great estates and responsibilities have no claim either to sympathy or justice. They are presumed to enjoy such a happy time that a little enforced restriction will do them good! If society had kept in closer touch with the newspapers, the hardship of some of the present laws that are breaking up an important Estate of the Realm would have been recognized.

But it is very hard to have any feeling of sympathy with a class that, for so long, pretended to regard the power of the Press as something that did not count.

If the Press served no other purpose than to correct idle legends, it would be worth while for those who suffer, to have these legends contradicted. There is still a tendency in conservative quarters to overlook the fact that journalism to-day is in the hands of men of education and experience.

I take Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace as an example of what Fleet Street could send out into the world. I remember his first visit to Easton, when I greeted a little man, with piercing eyes, neat beard, and large

white teeth, that looked too regular and too good to be true. I have been told that he was a master of seventeen languages.

Sir Donald acted as special emissary between the Empress Marie of Russia and Queen Alexandra. He was one of the confidential advisers of our greatest newspaper, as well as the trusted friend of Royalty. Apart from this, he was the only man I have ever met who could talk so lucidly of the Balkan tangle that its countless knots were unravelled as I listened. He explained " little Europe " quite clearly to me, though I was no politician and had never travelled in those parts. In the days when he was with us, the Balkans were the storm-centre of Europe, for antagonism nearer home had not developed. I found him a quiet, modest friendly man.

Undoubtedly statesmen must always depend upon the Press to act as their interpreters, and there are a few men who have achieved an astonishing success in this capacity—a success that has been of singular advantage to the rulers. A man died only a few months ago, who had lived very modestly in the heart of London, and wrote chiefly on foreign affairs in leading papers and reviews. But I have been told that Lord Salisbury thought so much of his judgment, his capacity and his modesty, that on more than one occasion he visited him in order to talk over the situation. He gave the simplest " At Homes," but in his study one met statesmen, politicians, travellers, authors, and others who mould the opinions of the world.

The late Frederick Greenwood performed a signal service to Lord Beaconsfield and to the country. My old friend Stead did something to improve relations

with Russia. In short, the Press is a power in the hands of competent men of good intent, and I am convinced that if the heads of the old families had invoked, instead of ignoring it, they would have had reason to be well-satisfied with the results.

I think it was the exploitation of the social side that alarmed them, and the introduction of methods that were born across the Atlantic, where democracy not only rules but is rampant. I have never shared the prejudices of my older circle, and this is well, for my second son went into Fleet Street, where I claim many friends.

I often wonder why I have never felt any call to join the ranks of the Temperance reformers, in spite of my appreciation of all they do. No doubt there were many hard drinkers among those whose blood runs in my veins, but personally I have remained indifferent to the attractions of alcohol. On occasion I take a glass of wine, but apart from this I am an abstainer by preference. Spirits revolt, and the cocktail habit disgusts me. I can enjoy myself to the fullest extent without wine or spirits.

I have seen sufficient tragedy arising from the misuse of alcohol to fill a volume with sensational stories. But without names they would be commonplace, and with names they would be cruel.

I have known of heirs to great estates, men of promise who have died of drink before they could succeed to their inheritance. I have known beautiful women who have disappeared from society, after a few years of married life, because they trusted to alcohol to carry the strain of the social round. I have known of others who, in early middle age, are suffering from dipsomania.

When I hear from the girls of this generation about the night-clubs they frequent, the hours into which they dance, the cocktails that keep them going, and the freedom of movement and association that they claim as a right, I am careful not to criticize, or even to express my disapproval unless an opinion is invited. Each generation must be a law unto itself, and I expect we shocked our elders as much as the rising generation shocks us. At the same time I realize that there is only a very fine dividing-line between freedom and licence.

But even in good Queen Victoria's time there was just one night-club in London that was frequented by society. It was called the New Club, and was in Soho, and a young married woman could go to it, provided always that she was accompanied by her husband—to have gone without him would have been to create a scandal of the first order. It was not a very attractive place, so far as I can remember, but the men could smoke, we could all have something to drink, and there were suppers, though these were by no means remarkable.

It goes without saying that no woman smoked, even though sharing a supper-table with her husband —that would have been most improper.

The chief attraction of the place was the presence of stars from stage-land. Many a time have I seen Kate Vaughan, the dancer and " toast of the town," coming in to supper with the late Colonel Freddie Wellesley.

What a fascinating creature she was, though to me she looked as though she were in an advanced stage of decline. I am afraid that the hours she kept, and the life she lived, did nothing much to

help her. Wellesley married her, but the union was not a success. His third wife, however, the charming Evelyn, Duchess of Wellington, atoned for his earlier disappointments. Freddie Wellesley and Kate Vaughan provided a centre of attraction at the New Club, and so did Connie Gilchrist, who would come on from the Gaiety, with the old Duke of Beaufort in close attendance. She became the Countess of Orkney, and lived very happily.

At last the night came at the New Club when one of the Beresfords—I forget whether it was Bill or Marcus—brought in a lady known as " Skittles." It would ill become me to say anything about the lady in these perfectly proper pages. Suffice it that her appearance in the New Club decided nearly all the young married men that they would not go there again —at least, that they would not bring their wives. It was not only that they knew the intruder—the real trouble was that she knew so many of them !

In those days etiquette for girls was very, very strict. I can remember walking with my chaperone, and being suddenly told to " Look the other way now, dear, and take no notice."

The reason was that some man we knew was passing in the company of a lady friend whom it was impossible for us to know. No man in such circumstances would take the slightest notice of anybody in his own world whom he chanced to meet.

The life of girls in the old time was strangely different from what it is now. Until we were eighteen, we were brought up at home. Governesses, companions, or chaperones looked after us, but there was no question of our being anywhere save under the parental roof unless we were invited to stay at some approved house

for a short time. What an adventure it was for me and my sister Blanche (Lady Algernon Gordon Lennox) to go to Holyrood when our stepfather was appointed Lord High Commissioner. To dine there, with elderly gentlemen of intense respectability, was an exciting experience, while to explore the palace was a joy.

I wonder if girls of this generation love their homes as we did. Personally, I fear not. Home ceases to have any meaning for them, though it may chance to be a part of English history. They look forward to a form of emancipation in which home plays no part at all.

When we were young, at Easton, my stepfather taught us to love it. I have criticized him for his hasty temper, and for other foibles from which none of us can be altogether free, but nobody could have been more devoted to his children or stepchildren than he was. Sometimes I think that my great love for the old home is the ripe fruit of the tree of his planting. Certainly he was never so happy as he was when sitting at the head of his own table, or taking his friends round the stables to show, and perhaps sell them, a promising horse.

My mother, that amazing great-great-grandmother, who still takes an intelligent interest in life though her ninetieth birthday is far behind her, loved her home better than any other place in the world. Perhaps that is why I cannot sympathize with a generation that regards home as a superfluity, or a nuisance.

My thoughts turned to Holyrood just now because I have had an invitation from my friends, James Brown and his wife. Once more he is High Commissioner for Scotland. They are a perfectly charming

old couple, and hardly need the shepherding and supervision of those quite unnecessary people who hold that, without their expert direction, it is impossible to avoid alarming errors.

Holyrood is comfortable to-day, for it has been modernized sufficiently. It is also, I believe, possible to live quite happily and pleasantly in Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace.

But I can remember all these historic houses when nobody need have envied those who occupied them. Bleak, bare, draughty and ill-appointed, they were utterly unattractive, and even dangerous to health. King Edward's dislike for Buckingham Palace was intense, and he took swift measures to improve the amenities when he came to the Throne. He added the comforts, while Queen Mary has arranged the treasures to great advantage.

In the old days when I knew Windsor Castle, it was quite easy to lose oneself there. I remember my husband staying up late one night with some of the men of the house-party, and saying too valiantly that he could find his way to his room. The search occupied the best part of an anxious hour, and was not free from embarrassments. Fortunately, the only room he mistook for his own was that of an elderly relative by marriage.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

OUR ANTIQUATED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A novel rôle ; Society and the financiers ; public confidence and public money ; empty titles ; our antiquated educational system ; French, German and Spanish ; the worship of the god Sport ; parental effort wasted ; a nation of snobs ; brains in the commercial world ; week-ends and leisure ; work a disagreeable necessity ; drifting into the House of Commons ; leadership ; no room for an idle class ; education in practical affairs ; the *Outspoken Review ;* the friendly financier ; no money required ; " What could you expect ? " ; Duke of Northumberland ; Sankey Report on the Coal situation ; the agricultural labourer ; the divine right of Dukes ; the agricultural labourer is at heart conservative ; his contact with Mother Nature ; his objection to Council houses ; a glorified Workhouse ; the thatch-and-plaster cottage of his youth ; opening the windows ; the Queen's Nurses ; no temptation to remain on the land ; political propaganda ; village indignation ; mechanized agriculture ; starving schoolchildren.

In the City society has been called upon to perform a novel rôle, and in most cases the performance has been to the dissatisfaction of all concerned. The heads of business houses, the men who had been ennobled by reason of their gifts, mental or monetary, have not really been in society in the ordinary sense of the term, while those scions of great houses who have been lured east of Temple Bar have not really been in business. All too often they have been associated with financiers who used their names as a fisherman uses bait.

There has been far too much of this unpleasant business in the past twenty years. As a rule, the titled director of an undertaking is the man who may be assumed to know least about its ramifications. The attempt to attract public confidence, and to draw

public money, by using an historic name is a caustic reflection upon the mentality of the average investor. In the long run he pays heavily for his respect for empty titles.

At the same time society must find its way into business of one sort or another if it wishes to live a full life. In another generation it will not need to stay at home to look after great estates, because there will be no estates to look after! The countryside will be broken up, and it may be that we shall have found in Nationalization the sane solution of the great land problem.

However this may be, we may rest assured that no man will remain the master of a six-figure acreage and a mansion to match. The times will not admit of such a possession, and people whose assets are of this kind will find that they amount to an actual liability at the end of the financial year.

It follows that the upper and the landed classes must join the middle and lower classes in a whole-hearted endeavour to earn an honest living. Few people recognize this fact, though it points to the necessity for a change in our antiquated and all too conservative educational system. I cannot help thinking that the expensive public school with a long history, the carefully guarded institution which fits boys chiefly for leading an idle life, must yield in the near future to something more practical. The curriculum must change. Greek and Latin, those ornaments of the era of leisure, must yield to French, German and Spanish, while the absurd worship of sport must be relegated to its proper place, which is nowhere near the forefront of things.

Nothing is better than that boys and girls should

be athletes, up to a point; that the boys should excel at cricket, football and tennis, and the girls at such exercises as are best suited to them. But we have overdone the sporting side, and have been unduly influenced by an absurd statement to the effect that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. Nothing of the kind ever did happen in the past, or will in the future. No purpose is served nowadays by such extravagant statements, and the time must have passed when they can convince anybody.

I meet many people who are feeling the pinch of the times, and are still making some considerable sacrifices in order to send Tom, Dick and Harry to Eton or Harrow or Winchester, and thence to Oxford or Cambridge. All this present effort may appear quite laudable, but when you come to ask the fond parents what their purpose is, you find it is astonishingly vague. They want their children to have a good time, and " to meet the right people."

In some respects we are indeed a nation of snobs, for I can only imagine that the " right people " are those who have wealth and the power to influence careers—the people who may entertain Tom, Dick and Harry in due season.

Why should fond parents fail to see that this attitude belongs to a dead past? The rise of the Labour party to power is the triumph of democracy over aristocracy, the triumph of brains and effort over brains and privilege. Every step of the way has been keenly contested, every Labour man who has taken a high place in the affairs of the nation has been compelled to fight hard for years before he could arrive. To-day the battle is, to a large extent, won.

Life is changing while we look on, and not only education but the outlook on education must change to keep pace with it.

At the same time ample opportunity is offered to people with brains and capacity in the commercial world. We are far behind the Germans in our business aptitude ; we lag behind France in industry. We have been accustomed for so many years to have the pick of the world's markets ; now they are passing from our grasp, and we shall need an enormous effort to recover them, if they are recoverable at all—a matter of grave doubt.

To this end commerce needs brains, intelligence, character and education, and while these gifts may be acquired by all classes, there is no reason why our aristocracy should not excel if it has the capacity to do so. The dice will never be loaded against the man of good family, as it has been loaded all through these years against the man who has been compelled to start his life without any advantages. Indeed, the aristocrat will always possess a certain advantage by reason of his presence and manner.

If our great public schools and our universities will learn in time to direct their efforts along modern lines, to cut out the things that do not matter, to reduce the absurd worship of sport, and to encourage the rising generation to learn that life is not an affair of week-ends and leisure, then I think we may establish commerce on quite another basis. We may lift the business career, no matter of what kind, so long as it is reputable and honest, to a place that it has not been able to reach hitherto.

I know that many of the great merchants, who own multiple stores and the rest, are anxious to find men

of education, resource and culture for responsible places ; but the people must be prepared to work like the rest of the world that has a living to get. In the old days we were inclined to regard business like every other form of work—it was a disagreeable necessity for certain unfortunate elements of the community. To-day we are beginning to understand that it is the medium through which we must labour with an ever-increasing diligence, in order, if possible, to maintain in reasonable comfort these greatly over-crowded islands. The very best that we have of capacity, goodwill and endeavour is required to get the machine of commerce back into working order.

If the young men of good family, who have undeniable capacities and hitherto have found no other fields than sport or politics in which to exercise them, can be brought to realize the importance of industry, and will do their best, I think we shall find our business equipment improved beyond recognition. Many are anxious to accomplish something, and to help the country through the years of a crisis, but they do not know how to begin. It is a fact that numerous young men of talent go into the House of Commons, where they find that there is no possibility of self-expression under our existing political system, no chance of doing the work that matters. In the country they busy themselves doing things that are for the most part unnecessary. From sheer boredom they seek refuge in sport, and in the end they pass their lives without achieving any useful purpose whatever.

They need a career ; they want to express themselves. In the old days, hundreds of years ago, England called upon her aristocrats to lead her armies.

To-day they can serve the same purpose, but the armies that are waiting to be led, by those who are fit for leadership, are the armies of commerce and industry!

I am quite sure that many people who read these lines will declare that they are the utterance of a disgruntled Socialist, bent upon change at any price, and need not be taken seriously. But in a very few years, so few that the time may be said to be within sight, they will find that I am right. There is no further room in Britain for a privileged and idle class, but there is more opportunity than ever before for people of sound and progressive ideas, who will bring intelligence to industry.

Nobody can suggest seriously that the average young man of good family can hope to do as his father did before him. He must work, and if the truth be told, he does not really object to work, so long as he can assure himself, and those among whom his life is cast, that it is not " bad form." Time is bringing them the opportunity, and it is a little distressing to find that, in the seats of the mighty, in the world where schoolmasters reign, the facts are still overlooked or disputed.

It is only here and there among the schools that do not boast of great tradition that men are taking time by the forelock, and preparing the boys in their care for the actualities of the strenuous and difficult years that lie before us. So far as the universities are concerned, change will be so slow that it may come too late to be of any value. In some measure at least they emulate the example of Nelson at the Battle of Copenhagen, and look at the future through a telescope applied to a blind eye. This practice

enables them still to preach consolation, comfort and hope to the dwindling members of the comfortable classes.

We need education in the practical affairs of life. I was told quite recently of a little girl of ten, keen on her work at a good-class private school. She knew all right that six times twelve made seventy-two, but when asked, a few minutes later what twelve times six made, she replied at once that they had not yet been taught the twelve-times table. This is typical of modern education.

I am no exception, as the following story will show. In the days of my greatest Socialist enthusiasm I wanted a Press organ, and planned the creation of one suited to my needs. It was to be called the *Outspoken Review*, and was to print the most modern and most daring opinions of the day. It was to depend upon its readers, whom it would startle by its boldness, so that the advertisers—if there were any—would not in any way control its policy.

I had no idea of the cost of running such a publication, but as I did not want it to be hampered by monetary difficulties I decided that I required an initial capital of fifty thousand. The question that confronted me, however, was how to get it. My wealthy friends were all individualists, and their help would begin and end with paying for an annual subscription, so that they might ascertain the limits of what they called my " madness." I knew that I must get the money elsewhere, so I sought advice from Mrs. George Augustus Sala. Her husband, the familiar G.A.S., had been a notable figure in Victorian journalism. From what I remember of him, I should describe him as a fierce old gentleman, in a

white waistcoat, well-informed on almost everything, who wrote leaders and understood cookery.

His widow was confident that she could help me, and for this purpose she brought to Easton a friend of hers, a financier. This gentleman had not then become what he was fated to be within a few years—a compulsory guest of His Majesty's Government. I was very happy when he assured me that there would be no trouble about the money. I was still more delighted to learn that he had shares to dispose of that would shortly be worth more than that—very much more. I could take fifty thousand pounds' worth, and when they rose, as they must within a few weeks, I could sell them at a large profit, keeping the fifty thousand, if I liked, for the running of the review.

It was reassuring, too, to be told that no money was required, and that all I had to do was to sign certain bills. By the time these became due I should be able to meet them out of the previously-mentioned large profit.

Having been surrounded by people whose word was reliable, it never occurred to me to doubt the financier's word, and very naturally I signed. It was all so simple that I did not mention the matter to my solicitors, bankers, or trustees.

In a short while the bills became due. But I never saw anything so unambitious as those shares! They did not even seem to be trying.

When the first bill was presented I hurried to the City to consult a financier who was a friend of mine.

"You should have come to me before you put pen to paper," was all he could say, for the shares were worthless. Unfortunately, the bills were worth all

that was on them, and for years I paid for my confidence in my strange adviser—paid, and saw our homes pass from their high estate, our position reduced, our difficulties multiplied.

Good friends sympathized, while those that were fairly good told one another: "Of course, what could you expect? Daisy is so extravagant."

The thing that wounded me more than any other feature in an unpleasant situation was that my review never saw the light.

The financier went to the Criminal Court, where he failed to explain himself to the judge. I do not think he repeated the really remarkable success that he had with me, when he came to Easton Lodge and carried away fifty thousand pounds' worth of bills in return for rather less than a shilling's worth of printed paper.

It seems strange to me to hear revived and repeated the self-same argument against progressive measures that we used all those years ago, when the country was dominated by the conservative point of view, as typified by such men as the late Duke of Northumberland.

The Duke died only recently, but he was a survival. He represented the general sentiments of the early and middle Victorian eras. All who read the Sankey Report on the coal situation must have realized that in the Duke they beheld one who was in effect regal. Those who felt as he did were not content to believe in the divine right of Kings; they believed even more firmly in the divine right of Dukes!

The agricultural labourer is at heart intensely, rigidly conservative. Tradition, instinct and association point one way. All that the agricultural

labourer has asked of life may be summed up in a few words. He has sought a living wage ; security from the workhouse ; cheap beer. No doubt he finds his happiness, such as it is—shall I call it contentment?—in his intimate contact with Mother Nature.

My knowledge of the farming classes convinces me that they have few other ambitions. To be sure, they have a certain awareness of conditions to-day that did not exist formerly, and their minds are responding slowly. Modern innovations brought about by the War, the return from the battle-fields of the boys who were destined for the plough, the glimpses of the greater world that come by way of the cinema and the wireless, have all had an effect upon the countryside mentality.

But, in the main, Hodge has not altered greatly. As an example of his conservatism you may take the outstanding objection to Council houses. I can only explain it on the ground that, in some dim fashion, he looks upon a Council house as a smart and undesirable first-cousin to a workhouse. It is something that has been built for him to be put in ; it is surrounded by by-laws, many of them narrow and objectionable and open to misunderstanding. It has little in common with the old and beautiful thatch-and-plaster of his youth.

I am not prepared to say that the beauty is a decisive factor, but I am quite sure that if the building authorities had followed the old fashion of construction, and had not been too urgent in emphasizing their taboos, the Council houses would have been looked upon in a very different light. Again, most of the old country cottages stand alone, or are semi-detached ;

but a row of houses invades privacy and consequently offends, while its rent is heavy, and, like its by-laws, oppressive. These by-laws must be seen to be believed ; they do away with the sense of home and of personal liberty.

On one occasion I sent the estate carpenter of Easton through the villages, with orders to make the windows of the cottages on the estate practicable. They had not been built to open, and I wanted to let more air and light into homes that did not have sufficient of either.

I never did anything so unpopular on the estate ! On all sides my action was regarded as a conspiracy against health, if not against life, and I heard of village folk who prophesied that their children would suffer from all manner of diseases that closed windows excluded and to which open windows were an invitation.

I think the greatest change in the mentality of the slow-thinking, middle-aged country folk was wrought by the Queen's Nurses. They came into being, I believe, as a memorial to Queen Victoria. Then came the Cottage Nurses, their introduction into Essex being due very largely to that sincere and broad-minded philanthropist, the Dowager Lady Rayleigh—a sister, by the way, of Lord Balfour—and to Dr. Thresh, the Medical Officer of Health for the county.

The practical result of the introduction of these nurses is seen best in the maternity cases. The death-rate among the children has fallen considerably, while fatality among mothers is now of rare occurrence. Not only is this good work of practical effect, but association with women who bring modern thought

and modern practice into rural life has an excellent and broadening result.

Rural education has progressed. It is practical, it is interesting, and the dull repetitive side of it is dying out gradually. Again, we must remember that the parents of the rising generation are no longer willing to admit that their girls are necessarily destined for domestic service, or their boys for the land. There is no temptation to boys to remain on the land to-day, because the minimum wage they earn at twenty-one is apparently the maximum one for life. They know that if they go into the towns they may earn better money. The problem presented is a sufficiently grave one, but I think it will be met in a little while by the mechanization of farming, and the employment at a good wage of the men who attend the animals and look after the machinery.

Another force operating in the same direction is political propaganda. On every village green you will find the supporters of every party ; the old-time nonsense that the supporter of the candidate, or his agent, could talk to the uninstructed is no longer worth the breath necessary for its utterance.

In this connexion Labour has set an example. The agricultural labourer is shrewd enough, and has a pretty good grasp of conditions, for all his apparent simplicity.

Many years ago I gave a living in one of the parishes to a hard-working, well-intentioned Socialist, who is now, after many vicissitudes, flourishing in Canada. He went about the countryside trying to arouse the villagers to a realization of their plight, which in those days was bad enough. His failure was conspicuous and complete.

I remember hearing of an address he gave in one village on the condition of the cottages. Many of them were in a very bad way, and lacked even elementary comforts. This is not surprising when we remember that some cottages were let for no more than a shilling a week, which was as much as many of the labourers could afford to pay. The landlord had to pay rates and attend to all repairs, and as the landlord's fortune declined progressively, the places fell into the condition in which they were then.

But when the speaker started to abuse the cottage accommodation, saying that it was not fit to house animals, and that many bullocks and horses were better lodged on the farms, he found himself suddenly up against a hostile crowd ! Soon he had to make his escape as best he could from people whom he had infuriated.

For some days afterwards the villagers were seething with indignation. The agricultural labourer was not angry with his landlord for leaving his cottage to tumble to ruin ; but he *was* angry with the man who, on the open platform on the village green, held his home up to ridicule. He could not see, he did not want to see, that the intention was good ; the only thing he could understand was that his home was his own and should not be criticized by strangers. You must live for a generation at least in an Essex village before you cease to be regarded as anything but a " foreigner ; " even when you have spent your generation among them, you may be told that " you doan't belong."

All things considered, the change in the rural outlook in the past few years has been remarkable. Formerly, the agricultural labourer learnt in his youth

to handle the scythe, the plough, the sickle, and a few other implements of immemorial use. He could trim a hedge, clean a ditch, lay a drain; he could work in the harvest field from the time when the great horn went booming across the fields at five o'clock in the morning until night called a halt to his labours. He could live on a microscopic wage, and he could be taken to the workhouse to die when his earning power was at an end.

This was the history of the agricultural labourer down to the beginning of the present century, and, in fact, for a few years after that. He was a serf in everything but name. To-day we have changed all that, and, oddly enough, although this change is due to the progressive forces of the country, the labourer remains at heart devoted to the old families and the old traditions. Sometimes when the families go, he allows the old house to take their place in his regard.

This is why I think the Labour party will find little support from the countryside, other than what it can extract from the abundant mistakes of its opponents. But in these mistakes we have a tower of strength.

One of the worst mistakes now being made by responsible educational authorities lies in the neglect to provide food for necessitous school-children. It is a curious fact that if an adult lacks food, the means of getting the bare necessities of life are within his grasp. The State no longer suffers him to starve. But if he is so poor that he cannot provide his children with food, the School Authorities will demand that those children shall travel to school, day after day, and submit themselves to instruction while in a state of complete inability to benefit by it.

This is an obvious blot upon the national escutcheon, and most of us would think that it has only to be pointed out to be wiped off. But in truth the agitation for the proper feeding of school-children has been going on for years, and such improvements as have been effected are due very largely to voluntary assistance. What is everybody's business is nobody's business.

The party to which I belong will, in due course, insist upon the right of the little ones to be fed as well as taught. Under clever management it is astonishing to find how cheaply hot nourishing meals can be served, while the difference in attention and intelligence between the unfed and the properly fed child is too startling to escape the notice even of the official mind.

There are few among us who could refuse a meal to a hungry child, for our imagination and our pity would be stirred. At the same time, the presence in our midst of *thousands* of hungry children leaves us unmoved. The countryside is a great sufferer from the under-feeding of its babies, and some day the agricultural labourer will learn where salvation lies.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE MEN OF THE GREAT WAR

Sir John French; M. Clemenceau; a momentous interview; I act as interpreter; "the Tiger"; the Entente; a plan for mobilization; a dangerous scrap of paper; Lord Kitchener; not a woman-hater; the stimulus of work in a tired man; a curio-hunter; Ben Tillett; French and Haig; misunderstandings; the British Legion; poison gas; an accursed thing; Lord Haldane and the War; a great German scholar; Israel Zangwill; Germany had no need for war; Dr. Sthamer; a hostile Foreign Office; hysterical hatred; Duke of Rutland; the Empress Frederick.

I HAD more reason than most to fear that war would come. The events of 1914 were no great surprise to me, for I had had the extraordinary experience of acting as interpreter during a private interview between Sir John French and M. Clemenceau which I had been the means of arranging.

Sir John was a very old friend of mine; he was obsessed by the idea of an imminent European upheaval. So real did the danger seem to him even then, although to the majority of statesmen Europe appeared peaceful enough, that he determined to go to France in order to study the language, so that he might be able to converse freely with those of whom he thought already as our allies.

Unfortunately, he had not the gift of tongues, so his progress was slow, despite the fact that he was spending the summer at Le Bouillet, devoting himself to the study of French. As he explained to me, when I interrupted my travels through France to pay him a

visit, he did not feel sufficiently at home in the language to carry on a conversation.

He confided to me that he had a consuming desire to meet M. Clemenceau unofficially, and have a talk with him, but since he did not talk French, he feared that such a meeting would prove useless. As I knew "the Tiger" well, and was certain that I could arrange a conference between the two men, I volunteered to do so and to act as interpreter. A short time afterwards I accompanied Sir John to M. Clemenceau's official residence.

I was struck from the beginning by the humorous side of my rôle. I realized that Clemenceau, a diplomat who knew full well the value of prestige, had copied the English in making it a rule to ignore the existence of foreign tongues. In reality, he spoke English quite well. He was far too clever not to read the English papers for himself, to say nothing of the fact that he had an American wife and had lived in America.

However, it was not a point that one could argue, and thus it was that I found myself listening to an all-important interchange of ideas between the two warriors.

The three of us sat in an upper room, hung with beautiful tapestries. I was looking at these with interest until the full drama of the situation burst upon me suddenly, and I realized that I was listening while a vital portion of history was in the making. The two men became symbols for me. I saw Clemenceau as France, cold, calculating, and—was it in view of the Entente Cordiale?—somewhat contemptuous. Sir John French was England, anxious to see that there was fair play and to show goodwill and good faith.

Clemenceau came to the point quickly, even abruptly.

" Tell Monsieur le Générale, a fig for your Entente ! How many men can be thrown into the field when the German invasion begins ? " he said to me.

" Forty to a hundred thousand trained soldiers," Sir John French replied.

This was the mobile force at Aldershot, as I learned afterwards.

Clemenceau laughed silently—and the silence was grimmer than any laughter that could have been heard. When I close my eyes, I can still see before me the harsh lines of that tiger face and the silent shaking of the shoulders.

" A million would not be enough," he cried scornfully.

A discussion of tactics followed, and General French sketched his plan of campaign. I am not permitted to disclose the actual scheme thought out by the one and approved by the other.

At all events, when Sir John French had said good-bye to M. Clemenceau, he went away more convinced than ever that we must hold ourselves in readiness for an imminent outbreak.

Shortly after this, he came to pay us a visit at Easton, and brought a volume on war strategy, which he urged me to study !

" I really don't think I should understand it," I protested.

" Oh, yes, you will. I'll sketch our war plans, and that will help you," said Sir John.

I watched with interest while he drew on a piece of paper an elaboration of the scheme that I had heard discussed when I acted as interpreter between himself and M. Clemenceau.

" General," I said, as we sat alone in the library, " you speak as though you really were positive that the war is coming. But, if it were not for that talk between M. Clemenceau and yourself, it would seem just as far off as it did to me in the days when I was a young girl, and people were praising Germany and calling the French ' froggies ! ' After all, we *are* going our ways peacefully enough."

Sir John shook his head ominously.

" We are very close to it," he said, in a low voice. " Events are moving in a direction that makes it inevitable. That is why we are making our plans, and," he looked me straight in the eyes, " none too soon—none too soon ! "

There came back to me the picture of Clemenceau as I had last seen him, a bitter but brilliant man, with as many foes as friends, and certainly as full of hatred as of wit. I saw once again the hands that were never still, the hard chin, the unquiet lips, the curiously outstanding ears, and the bushy disordered eyebrows. Again I heard the merciless vibrant voice, which seemed to possess power to strike through every superficiality, every excuse, every reserve, and to pierce to the very core of the matter under discussion.

Before conversation could be resumed, some interruption came. What it was I cannot recall, but Sir John slipped the volume on war tactics on to one of the shelves, and we left the library.

I forgot all about our conversation. Some months passed, then one day I received an anxious letter from Sir John asking me whether I could find the rough drawing he had made, as it was too important to be allowed to fall into the wrong hands.

A time of suspense followed. I could remember

the drawing perfectly, but as to what had become of it my mind was a blank. At last I told myself that if I went into the library the surroundings would suggest the recollection that eluded me. Fortunately, this proved to be the case. Once I was there, concentrating upon that talk we had had together, I seemed to gather a vague and shadowy picture of Sir John putting a book on a shelf. There are thousands of books in the library at Easton, so my task would not have been an easy one if I had not been fortunate enough to remember fairly well where we had been sitting, thus eliminating a great portion of the room.

I searched feverishly, and at last, to my infinite relief, I found the book on war tactics. I took it from the shelf, and as I opened it, there was the drawing. I burned it, and watched until there was nothing left but ash.

The whole world thought that Lord Kitchener was taciturn; in fact, the genuine " strong silent man." Actually, he was not articulate, and as he felt that his words were nearly always inadequate to express his ideas, he remained in what I can only call a " baffled silence."

There was a number of such mistaken impressions about him, due in part to the fact that he spoke so little. Another was that he was a woman-hater. In reality, he had a number of woman friends whose opinions he valued.

I am sure that Lord Kitchener was unconscious of the fact that his taciturnity added to the romantic aspect of his personality. I always felt that if he could have spoken easily and lightly, he would have done so. But persiflage was not for him.

After he had assumed command in 1914, I realized how heavily his responsibilities were weighing on him. He was quite changed. He looked haggard and ill, and I grasped suddenly that he was past his prime, a fact which had never occurred to me before.

" I had no choice," he said to my son. " When the offer came, my duty was clear enough. After giving the best years of my life to hard work, I was looking forward to a few years of undisturbed peace and quiet in the country—collecting old furniture and enjoying my hobbies."

I remember saying, " When you were here three years ago, you visited all the curio shops in Warwick."

" That was a very happy time for me. I enjoyed that visit—the peacefulness of the surroundings, and the freedom with which you allowed me to go my way and spend hours examining antiques. That was the sort of thing I hoped to continue doing," said Lord Kitchener. " I had taken off my armour for good and all, or so I hoped and believed. I thought that the most I should have to do would be a little administrative work, but now——"

He broke off abruptly as he envisaged the difficult tasks that awaited him. Believing it would be better for him to think of other things, if only for a little while, we changed the subject, and shortly afterwards he took his leave.

As we parted I could not help feeling that he was not fit enough to bear the burden that had fallen upon him, for I feared that his health would give way under the strain. I had, however, under-estimated his capacity to respond to the stimulus of patriotic duty. As a matter of fact, under the rigour of office routine, he recovered a great part of his élan. The

old power to exercise authority was never more strongly marked than during the first months of his reign at the War Office.

During those early days of the War, my friend Ben Tillett used to visit Kitchener a great deal at the War Office. He told me once, after Kitchener had said that he believed that the War would last for years, that he took his arm and led him to the window.

" Do you see those lamp-posts ? " he inquired, and Ben, amazed at the question, nodded.

" I should not be surprised if you and I were hanging from them before this thing is over," said Kitchener gravely.

Nothing was ever truer than that " The gods of the old religions become the devils of the new." This was well illustrated in the change of popular attitude towards Lord Kitchener.

It has always been a matter of regret to me that the two friends who were equally known to us, French and Haig, whom I knew when they were as close to one another as David and Jonathan, should have been sundered by the War. Both used to visit us at Easton and at Warwick, and it was difficult to appreciate the one to the full without seeing the other, for two more opposite types could not be imagined.

Sir John French was very sociable, and, save where his work was concerned, frivolous, whereas Douglas Haig, a Scot, was chary of words and cautious as only a Scot can be. I once chaffed him by declaring that he solemnly counted five before answering any question, including his opinion concerning the weather.

" Now that you call my attention to it, perhaps five is not enough. I will consider making it ten," Haig replied, unmoved.

His work was rarely absent from his mind. If he rode to hounds, he would examine the country from the point of view of a soldier, not from that of a hunting man. One could almost think of him disposing of his troops as he rode along.

Lord Haig's work is so much alive to-day that I can never bring myself to think of him as one who has passed.

He was very reserved, and sometimes abrupt ; this did not always please his fellow-officers, a fact to which he was indifferent. I suppose he realized that the rank-and-file soldier was ready to follow him at any moment, and knew that this faith was the most precious tribute of any that could be offered.

The British Legion was Lord Haig's last and most lasting work. When the War was over and he surveyed the ranks of the maimed and the broken, particularly the victims of the most terrible curse that this century has known, poison gas, he made up his mind that he would give all that was left of his life to their service.

Poison gas roused him to such bitter loathing that the subject became almost an obsession. I shall never forget how his emotion broke through his habitual reserve on one occasion.

" It is an accursed thing, and nothing in the world can justify its use against human beings, civilized or savage ! "

" Is the pain that it inflicts so dreadful ? " I inquired, wondering whether he was thinking of the actual suffering that poison gas gave at the time of inhalation, or of its after-effects.

" I tell you it is worse than the tortures of the Inquisition ! " he cried, and talked of many cases he had known. " If I had my way, I would use the

cinematograph to show the effect of poison gas upon men and animals. I would make it compulsory for the film to be shown in every secondary school and every industrial centre. Such pictures ought to be exhibited all over the world—that would be a useful piece of work for the League of Nations to undertake, far more effective than all the written or spoken propaganda."

I have often thought of this idea, and wondered how this peace-propaganda could be achieved. Also, I have wondered, and still do wonder, how it is that some group of intelligent people, such as the controllers of the Rockefeller Institute, does not establish a world-wide campaign along these lines. To my mind, useful as buildings for scientific research can be, education in practical humaneness for those who occupy the buildings seems to be more important still.

One of the most interesting things in life is to contrast the types of mind with which one comes into contact, and to note how differently they react to ideas and education.

Haig, Kitchener, French, all soldiers, were as different from one another as human beings could possibly be. So were many of the statesmen I knew, the philosophers and the artists, yet they were all striving in their separate ways for much the same objectives.

The War certainly inflicted mortal wounds on many who were not at the Front. Certain outstanding people were sadly misunderstood, and, of all these, I think that Richard Burdon Haldane was the most unjustly regarded.

It was he who made the British participation possible at the outset of the War; it was he whose arrangements

enabled the Expeditionary Force to take its place in the fighting line.

But because he was a German scholar and respected German scholarship—a sentiment which most of us to-day share without feeling in the least unpatriotic—he was held up to abuse and obloquy. Fortunately, he had the philosophic mind, and could estimate this hysterical outbreak of feeling against him at its proper value.

I was disturbed by it, because I knew Lord Haldane and realized his worth. I knew that he was one of England's premier statesmen, and that, if he had been able to devote his massive intelligence to reform, he would have brought about a change in our educational system that would have been of inestimable value to the State.

When the campaign against Lord Haldane was at its height, I wrote an article in his defence, and, to my pleased surprise, a daily newspaper published it.

I received from him a very characteristic letter in acknowledgment of this small service.

> "It was good of you to take up the cudgels in such an unpopular cause as I am," he wrote; "but please do not think that I am greatly disturbed by the ceaseless attacks upon me from certain quarters. I have the feeling that History will be written truly in the course of time, then my reputation will no longer be covered by the mound of abuse that has been heaped upon it."

Lord Haldane was the fine type of unsensational politician. Education was the subject that most interested him, and it was because he considered

German education superior to our own that he sought to study it from within.

He was not alone in his views, for there were many who realized that German education was making greater strides than British. In this connexion I remember that Israel Zangwill, the distinguished writer, talked to me during the War about the German position.

" I cannot understand why Germany was mad enough to go to war, when, if she had remained at peace, everything that was worth having commercially would, in the course of the next twenty years, have fallen into her hands."

But Lord Haldane suffered the traditional fate of those who are broader of vision than their fellows. When Anaxagoras taught that the moon had plains and ravines in it, he was threatened with death—the argument against him being in effect, " If this were so, where would there be room for our gods." If I remember my history aright, only the intervention of his friend Pericles saved him.

The attitude towards Lord Haldane was somewhat similar, save that in his case there was no Pericles. He was mercilessly condemned because he wished to bring to the service of his countrymen the methods that, before the War, were enabling Germany to expand in so striking a fashion in all directions. No doubt, if he had succeeded in doing so, a few of our present educational deities would, like the gods of old, have been rendered homeless.

I think that another man who suffered greatly through the War was Dr. Sthamer, the late German Ambassador.

When first he reopened the great mansion in Carlton

House Terrace after the War, he had to face a country that was seething with ill-feeling, and he was fully conscious that the most innocent action on his part might be misunderstood. He was up against a hostile Foreign Office, a cold and suspicious Diplomatic Corps, a society that, through the hysterical hatred which is the aftermath of all wars, still regarded Germany as the source of all imaginable evil.

It was remarkably plucky of Dr. Sthamer to take on the delicate work, which was of such magnitude that it might well have daunted a man many years younger. Fortunately, he had a charming and cultured American wife to help him.

When Germany was defeated, most of her great men—and I count Dr. Sthamer among these—apparently resolved to give up everything for her, without thought of self. I recall Walter Rathenau and Stresemann, and various others, who sacrificed their lives in order to bring their country back into the comity of nations.

Fortunately, fine qualities and heroism are not confined to any one nation. No nation need suffer spiritual defeat, even though the War be lost.

I think that those who knew a little of what was going on behind the scenes in the early days of the War, suffered more than the general public. I had grave misgivings about conditions, for reasons that I have explained elsewhere ; but I did not realize quite how serious was the situation until one day I paid a flying visit to London in connexion with some arrangements for hospital work. I met Henry, Duke of Rutland, in Bond Street. He was the first to tell me the real facts of the early days of the campaign—a disastrous defeat of the French troops gathered from

the Southern Provinces, troops that could not stand up against the shock of the German advance. From him I learnt that Sir John French was retreating, that the onslaught of the German forces was immeasurably fierce, and that nobody in authority could tell from hour to hour what disaster was coming.

As I was standing there in Bond Street, talking to the Duke, a group of women passed, bent on shopping, and there was not one of them that I did not envy, because she, at least, had not felt the sudden icy chill that had gripped me as I listened to my friend's sinister words.

My next thought was that I was not sorry that the Empress Frederick had died long before this horror, for she had been a kind friend to me. Her position, always difficult, would have been indescribably terrible if she had lived to see the War.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE ADVENT OF LABOUR

A Victorian of to-day; Mr. Gladstone and his peers; advantages of the Conservative party; Labour and the leaders of society; Mrs. Snowden; a red light; rulers for hundreds of years; the old traditions destroyed by taxes; "niggers"; born to serve; the reward of good deeds; Mrs. Bridges Adams; Will Thorne; John Clynes; Sir John Gorst; William Morris; Walter Crane, the cartoonist of Socialism; Cobden Sanderson; Bradlaugh's sweep at Northampton; a "Savoy" dinner; Herbert Morrison; Arthur Greenwood; Dr. Hugh Dalton; Susan Lawrence; George Lansbury; slums and railings; Lord Melchett; the most enduring memorial.

CONSIDERING the fact that I am a Victorian, according to date, I am fortunate in having met so many men and women who were active-minded, for they attract me far more than the passive types.

I sympathize with all attempts at improvement, even with the inevitable blunders made by those who dare to risk change. Perhaps this is because I myself am always driven by an acute desire to right anything that strikes me as wrong, more particularly when the victim is of a type that cannot successfully fight his own battle. Hence my many political disagreements with my friends.

Fortunately, even among those with whom I have disagreed, there are still many whose friendship I have retained. If this had not been so there was a time when I should scarcely have had any friends at all, for I became interested in the Labour movement when the idea that we could have a Labour Government was deemed fantastic. The mere mention of

certain men who have since been in the Cabinet was regarded as the manifestation of a mild form of insanity, or a deliberate desire to provoke.

Down to a dozen or more years ago, very few of us who belonged of right to the Victorian era had known what realism in politics meant, though we may have thought we did. Liberals and Conservatives were so very much alike! Mr. Gladstone used to complain that, as soon as he made a Liberal peer, his eldest son joined the rival party.

"In spite of my efforts," he once remarked, "there is not a Liberal Duke in the Upper House, and it is only among the Barons that we can show a real following."

It was the truth, of course, however unpleasant, because most of the men who went into politics with an eye to the main chance sought the social advantages that the Conservative party could offer—they knew that Liberalism could never be as effective as its rival.

The Conservatives have always possessed the great art of making themselves appear the one party that matters, the one section of the community that holds the elect. Few people like to belong to a minority party. That is why the difference between Liberal and Conservative, so far as political principles were concerned, and in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, was the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

To-day, though we have had a Labour Government, let nobody suppose that Labour is influencing the leaders of society, or is even making a social party in the old sense of the term. The gyrations of Mr. Lloyd George and his friends did nothing to affect the main

facts of the case. There can be no friendly social intercourse between Labour and the other great parties of the State—antagonisms are too fundamental; their purposes lie too far apart.

"I do not see my Prime Minister," the present King is reported to have said to a certain peer, who was giving a formal dinner party. It was the days of the first Labour Government.

"I am afraid, sir," was his host's reply, "that, until the Government changes, you will not see your Prime Minister in my house."

Alone among the wives of the members of the late Government Mrs. Snowden has achieved social recognition. She enjoys the friendship of a number of distinguished people, and gathers music-lovers of all classes round her. Elsewhere the cleavage is real. The satire with which the Labour party is regarded among followers of the old regime is astonishing, even to me who know how deeply party feelings could run among the rank and file. In the innermost circle, however, nobody took political differences seriously.

To many of those who look for the realization of "Socialism in our time," the late Cabinet had no elements in it that were violent or subversive; but to the old land-owning class in this country, threatened by inexorable progress, the Cabinet and all it stood for appeared in quite another light, and a very red light at that!

No one can wonder at this point of view.

We have before us a class that has ruled England for hundreds of years. It may not have ruled very cleverly, or very selflessly, but it has acted with a certain sense of patriotism, a certain determination

to uphold the State. To-day it finds that it cannot live in the old family homes, that it cannot entertain life-long friends, that the traditions of the centuries are being destroyed by the tax collector, and that the associates of the people who used to fetch and carry, to hew wood and draw water, are in the seats of the mighty, dictating terms to their sometime masters.

It is impossible for those who are not in frequent contact with fine old crusted Toryism to understand how this change is resented. I cannot express it better than by saying that many men and women of my acquaintance regard the present position much as the descendants of those who travelled in the *Mayflower* to the United States might regard it if the people they like to call " niggers " came into power.

The poor man, the landless man, the man without quarterings or traditions, who had not so much as a nodding acquaintance with Debrett, has always been looked upon in all seriousness as someone born to serve. If he served well, he might be thanked, but let him make no mistake about it, service was his privilege as well as his duty. Intellect did not matter, capacity did not matter, but blood or landed possession did ; the only acknowledgment that the society of my time would give willingly to the rising Democracy took the form of accepting those who gained a peerage by their good deeds. So long as a right man had been ennobled it was possible to suffer his son or daughter to marry into a house where the quarterings were many but the rent-roll insignificant. This given, the rest was easy, because their wives and daughters would gravitate naturally towards the party that had the largest social outlook. Hence

Mr. Gladstone's lament that his Liberal peers tended, within a generation, to become Tories.

The first vital experience that I had in the Labour movement was when Mrs. Bridges Adams, Will Thorne, John Clynes, Sir John Gorst, and various others of us tramped the country to try to arouse sufficient feeling to enforce compulsory feeding of starving children. It was an exciting period, for we all had the cause deeply at heart. I had visited hospitals in plenty, and seen the victims of malnutrition. The community had waited until they were beyond all aid before offering the food that would have kept body and soul together.

To-day in view of all that the Trade Unions have achieved for the working man and his family, it is difficult to believe that conditions such as I knew really did exist.

Naturally I felt that I had to throw myself into the fight, and I joined up.

Will Thorne was then the dominant personality of our group. He had worked in a brickworks at the age of six, and he had never forgotten the horror of carrying the heavy bricks while his bones were still unformed. Thousands were crushed by a life similar to that which he had led. Thousands died. Will Thorne, exceptionally strong in every way, survived to tell the tale, and he told it to such good effect that every working man's child has cause to be grateful to him.

I turn with relief to recollections of more pleasant experiences. Among my earlier enthusiasms, William Morris led the movement and inspired many of his contemporaries. One of his devoted followers was Walter Crane, of the exquisite hands and musical

voice, who was the cartoonist of Socialism. He was often my guest at Easton, and every year would send me some of his work, with a gracious inscription. The fire at Easton robbed me of all these precious souvenirs, and there were few that I regretted more than those from Walter Crane.

Another true friend to Socialism was Cobden Sanderson, who bound so many of the books that are now lost to me.

The other day, looking through a file of old letters, I came across one that particularly amused me. Since it was written by a woman who is still alive I must not disclose the identity of the writer, but I will quote the letter for its value in displaying a characteristic reaction at that era to all things new.

> " The news of Bradlaugh's sweep at Northampton has just reached us. People had begun to say that he was certain of defeat, but, alas ! the beast has won after all. What folly not to have sent a Liberal against him ! but, dreadful as it is, perhaps it will do the Government more harm than if he had been defeated. They will have him on their hands, and they won't know how to deal with him. What a horrible state of things ! "

As I read this I was reminded of a story told by a friend of mine who had appeared somewhat late at a dinner party at the Savoy. As he apologized to his hostess, he added, " I was detained because there was some excitement in the House. The news had just come through that Keir Hardie had died."

His hostess smiled charmingly at him, then her face took on a devout expression.

" Thank God ! " she exclaimed fervently.

From Bradlaugh to Keir Hardie carries us from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, but it teaches us that there persists a certain type of mind which time and progress cannot touch, let alone change. I am thankful that I have had sufficient curiosity always to wish to acquaint myself with new ideas.

Undoubtedly the most interesting and stimulating people I have met were among the circle in which I moved after joining the Socialist party. In the years when Easton Lodge served as the " Chequers " of the Labour party that had yet to find power and grace, I had opportunity to meet and observe closely some of the younger men, to whom the country may look to-day with confidence.

Foremost among these I place Herbert Morrison, late Minister of Transport. He combines a remarkable grasp of affairs with that breadth of mind and vision so seldom found in the followers of what are called party politics. It was at Easton that we became friends, and that I learned something of his hopes and aims.

He first made his name in public life through the work he accomplished on the London County Council, where he rose to high office. As Minister of Transport, faced with the extraordinary problem of our growing traffic, a factor which affects all trades and countless livelihoods, he took into account not only the needs of the moment but the requirements of the future. I have no doubt that, in so doing, although he had to battle against those who are less far-sighted than himself, he rendered the country a valuable service.

Another man who made a considerable impression

upon me was Arthur Greenwood. He realized full well that, as Minister of Health, it was up to him to tackle the Slum Clearance question—undoubtedly one of the gravest, most difficult and complicated problems of the age. He was not daunted, even though he knew that he would have to face open opposition, as well as the more sinister and subtle antagonism of those who will find their profits gone if they are no longer able to sacrifice men, women and children to their desire for wealth and power.

Dr. Hugh Dalton, the third of the younger men of whom I expect big things, is that interesting figure, a born Tory turned Labour Member. He is the son of a canon of Windsor, and a professor of the London School of Economics. He brought to his job what Oliver Wendell Holmes once called a " three-decker brain." He was at the Foreign Office, but I expect to see him some day at the Exchequer. He is a prominent figure in Parliament, and to the intense annoyance of those who challenge his statements, he is always completely documented.

Another person for whom I have a great admiration is Susan Lawrence, who, like Dr. Dalton, emerged from a Conservative background to put her fine intellect at the service of the country. She is a splendid type of woman, and though there are a number of clever women in Socialist circles and within the Labour party, I know of no one more profound or sincere than she.

George Lansbury is no longer among the young men in point of years, but his spirit has never grown old. I lunched with him on one occasion at his office in Whitehall, and, because he had a guest, he added roast mutton to his usual menu, which consists of

bread and cheese. I should have said that Mr. Lansbury had two guests, for Arthur Greenwood was with us.

Lunch did not take very long—when George Lansbury is alone I doubt whether he will spare as much as ten minutes for a meal—and when it was over we looked out of the windows over St. James's Park.

" I shall not count my work complete," said George Lansbury, " until I have cleared away every railing from London parks and squares. I can't bear to look at railings—they stand for everything I dislike."

Arthur Greenwood looked at him pensively.

" You have an easier job than I have," he commented. " I shall find no rest until every slum is removed from the face of London and the big cities all over England. A slum is harder to shift than a railing."

As a matter of fact one of the first reforms that Mr. Greenwood tried to effect was for the welfare of his own subordinates. Knowing that he was pressing for new offices at Whitehall, I asked him whether the need was really urgent.

" Urgent ? " he queried. " You should see the conditions in which some of my staff work—not only mine, but the staffs of other departments. There are men and women who serve in Whitehall from January to December under artificial light, in basements that cannot possibly be hygienic, since the sun, the greatest disinfectant of all, can never reach there.

" I know," he continued, " there will be the usual outcry about spendthrift action, but I hold that the Government departments of the greatest city in the world must offer their workers something better than

a cellar. Apart from the humanity of the thing, it is economically short-sighted and foolish to hamper workers in this fashion. It seems also ironic, too, that people treated in such a manner should be working on Slum Clearance ! "

As a Socialist there are few capitalists whom I have admired, but there was one who, alas, has passed from our midst recently, for whom I had great respect. This was Lord Melchett.

We never met, but I knew a good deal of his activities from some of my friends in Labour circles. A prominent politician, who is also a Trade Unionist, remarked to me not long ago : " If all the capitalists were like Lord Melchett, there would be peace in industry. He has the one quality that most moneyed men lack—imagination. He can understand and sympathize with the under-dog. He has large ideals.

" He has, too, moments of vision, for I think he is already envisaging a newer and healthier industrial world. He really does realize that men can give of their best only if they are free from the shadow of penury. His large-scale combines do seek to make life possible for the workers, and he is one of the few Imperialists whose imperial vision embraces the manual worker."

I think that this tribute is of the kind that would have been appreciated by Lord Melchett himself, for he was wise in his generation, and knew that the thoughts a man has implanted in the minds of those who came within his sphere of influence are more enduring than any other memorial.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE STATELY HOMES OF ENGLAND

The old owners cannot maintain them to-day ; value of sentiment in education ; Death Duties ; everything must be in harmony ; living in one's coachman's cottage ; Warwick Castle not a home ; Easton Lodge ; Haddon Hall and Chatsworth ; effect of the motor-car ; " Lady Bountiful " ; a system of serfdom ; when the Family went to church ; effect on trade ; the question of precedence ; the Servants' Hall ; modern farmers more independent ; bicycles ; the cinema, the wireless ; medical inspection of children ; the big town houses ; " What shadows we pursue ! " ; Dorchester House ; Beauty and the Beast ; Mr. and Mrs. Holford ; curio collecting ; Weston Birt now a school ; bedroom accommodation inadequate ; labour-saving devices ; Victorian architectural atrocities ; Wentworth and its three hundred bedrooms ; Chatsworth ; Welbeck Abbey ; Easton Lodge Visitors' Book of 1882 ; earthquake in the Midlands ; the Prince of Pless and a practical joker ; etiquette of Royal visits ; standing in the Royal Presence ; the Prince Consort and Sir Lyon Playfair ; precedence at the dinner-table ; politics taboo ; Lord Beaconsfield's cuisine ; the Rothschilds ; importance of punctuality ; Lady Laurier's oversight ; informal luncheons ; Lady Dorothy Neville.

THE " Stately Homes of England " are on the market. With a few exceptions you can have your choice, to buy or rent, furnished or unfurnished. Whoever else may be able to maintain them, it is not the age-old owners. It is possible to-day to point to many places that once played a great part in social history that now are schools, or have been acquired by municipalities for the use or service of the general public.

On sentimental grounds this may be deplored. When a boy is brought up in surroundings that history has touched and the centuries have hallowed, he may look upon his home with a love that comes near

veneration. He may thrill to the appeal of its beauty, and feel a sense of responsibility towards the great pile that has housed his forbears. But when death strikes the tenant-for-life, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has finished with the estate, it is more than likely that the heir will find himself with a choice of evils—either to live in a very restricted fashion in one corner of the old house, to dismantle it or let it to strangers, or even, if it is possible, to break the entail and sell at the best price it will fetch.

If there is one thing that mars the pleasure of living in an historic house it is the inability to entertain in character. Nothing can be quite so dismal as a big suite of reception rooms perennially closed ; nothing more depressing than a long corridor with rooms whose doors are never opened ; nothing more trying than a park and gardens which have to be kept up on diminishing resources and a reduced staff.

Small wonder that many great houses to-day are boarding-schools, or that the leading agents in London have scores of great estates on their books—places in which it is quite impossible for the owners to live and enjoy the amenities that were planned by the earlier owners.

I know of one spacious historic mansion whose owner occupied only three of its rooms for many years ; I have known many places in which, since the War, one wing has sufficed for residence and entertainment. I know the widow of a great peer who lived, for a little while, in the house that had been occupied by her coachman in more affluent times.

There can be no doubt that the great English houses will disappear from the map, except in those cases where marriage with some daughter of an enormously

wealthy American has restored the fallen fortunes of the family, or some multi-millionaire manufacturer of our own country has given his daughter in marriage to the head of an old English house.

I am not concerned with the hardship of these things, because it is not very apparent to me. In the old days I could never understand why anybody should wish to live in Warwick Castle rather than in any other museum or picture-gallery. It bears a certain depressing likeness to another castle in Holloway. Easton is so cumbrous, so Victorian in its external aspect, that I have always chosen to live in a wing of the house, keeping the main building open for entertainment only. I never heard the owners of Chatsworth, Mentmore, Trentham, or Belvoir speak of their great possession in terms of satisfaction. The young Duke of Rutland prefers the exquisite repose of Haddon Hall. My son Guy preferred the fishing cottage on the Avon, in the park, to the lordly pleasure-house that has outlived its time because it has outlived its income.

In the long run it seems likely that houses were made for man, and that it is a mistake to think that men are made for houses. It was always a great responsibility to maintain a large place, and the calls of life, even in the days when there was no motor-car to aid rapid transport, were far too many to enable full advantage to be taken of the country house, save by the few whose love for the country was very real.

I am not sure that the motor has not done as much as the super-tax and the death duties to demobilize the great country houses. The question I ask myself is whether they served any purpose that will be greatly missed.

In the old days the châtelaine played the part of Lady Bountiful, and gave of her time, and dispensed her charity with a free hand. The sick and the poor looked up to her as a source of " dole," and I think that it is only fair to say that she was kind at heart and well-meaning, even where the gods had not blessed her with any special measure of intelligence. But the system for which she stood was founded on something akin to serfdom ; the rising tide of democracy has carried it away—unwept, unhonoured and unsung, except by those in whose blood there is something of the flunkey strain.

I have told elsewhere how, in the early days, the family visit to the small Easton Church was associated with all sorts of outward expressions of respect that were incredible to me even as a child. I know that my mother and stepfather were good to the poor, but it was always a goodness of extreme condescension. On matters of faith, politics, education and hygiene, they were convinced that those who served had no right to an opinion. It was not only at Easton and at Warwick that a measure of serfdom prevailed, but in the surroundings of every country house I ever visited, even in Scotland.

A Radical was suspect, a free-thinker was an abomination, for independence was not suffered. The landowning classes expected a certain fealty, a certain acceptance of the view of those who gave the " dole." Blankets, soup, coals, rabbits, and the rest were all paid for, though not in cash—because the recipients were the poorest of the poor—but in subservience, in the surrender of all personality, and in a certain measure of humility from which there could be no escape.

Snobbery ran riot, from the lodge-keeper who opened the gates with a profound obeisance, to the little children who were instructed to pull their forelocks or make a curtsy. We paid in cash and took in kind.

There were degrees of precedence even in the small country towns, where members of the professional class were not on social terms with those of the class immediately below them. There were all sorts of subtle differences, so that people were ticketed or labelled as though they had passed through the hands of a scientist. So keen was this question of precedence that it passed from the reception rooms of the big country houses to the servants' halls. There the maid of the Duchess would go in to dinner with the valet of the Duke, while the maid or the valet of a commoner, however eminent, would sit, so to speak, below the salt. The housekeeper was an autocrat, in whose hands the real executive control of the house was vested. Democracy had not arisen, and could not arise while the old country houses were a power in the land. Even on the rare occasions when a great place was let for the shooting or hunting season, the people who took it would follow the same rules of life and the same comical etiquette was maintained below-stairs.

In such circumstances victimization was inevitable. The Radical shopkeeper would receive scanty patronage, the Nonconformist tradesman would be suspect. Nothing in the way of Radical views was tolerated. The children of the farm labourers were expected to go to the plough, or into service, regardless of any aptitude they might possess for other occupations. Their place in the scheme of things was marked out

for them, and there was nothing to be said in favour of change. The best that could happen to the boys was to be taken into the service of the estate ; for the girls, to be trained by the housekeeper and admitted to the servants' hall after due probation.

Farmers, like the others, were expected to conform. When bad years came, if there was nothing against them, they were certain to receive generous treatment. The agent would hear their appeals for assistance and would recommend them for help. But if the tenant was suspected of holding Radical views, especially if he had been so indiscreet as to express them aloud, the chances were that, when he failed to meet his obligations, or if he was suspected of shooting the noble landowner's pheasants, he would be dismissed without mercy. He was simply a black sheep, a corrupter of the flock, a man it was impossible to endure. For the sake of a system that was regarded as the only possible one, it was necessary that he should go into the outer darkness.

To-day this old condition has disappeared, or is only precariously maintained, and with great difficulty, by a few of the *nouveaux riches*. The great house is no longer the fount of charity, since it can hardly maintain its own roof, much less those of its humble neighbours.

Side by side with the passing of power from the centre, there has been a growth of independence within the circumference. To-day the countryman may belong to any party—Tory, Liberal, Labour—without ostracism or definite penalty. He may go to church or chapel, or remain away from either. He may refuse to send his sons on to the land, or his daughters into domestic service. He has a certain

fixity of tenure, and a certain minimum wage, if he is on the land.

Small though this wage may be, it is quite different from what it was before the War ; where the boys go on to the land, they start at ten shillings a week instead of half a crown. Transport has come to their aid. It is astonishing to find how many bicycles there are in every village, and how easy it is for the boys and girls to get about. The cinema is now within fairly easy access, whilst the wireless has brought them both amusement and education.

Our parents knew nothing about hygiene, or very little ; now it is understood and practised. A disease is diagnosed early, and the medical inspection of children in schools has done a great deal for the life of the countryside. A farmer can claim redress for disturbance, as well as compensation for his own improvements. When I was young such changes were inconceivable.

All this has developed while the country house has been falling into decay. I cannot help thinking that under the old regime the mere suggestion of these innovations would have been regarded as an impertinence, and resented by those who looked upon the surrounding villages as their private property. They were firmly convinced that direct descent, and the possession of ample means, was an adequate substitute for specialized knowledge and wide sympathies.

When I read to-day of great houses being taken over by public authorities, or left with a skeleton staff until some public authority shall come along, I confess that I can find no occasion for commiseration or regret. If I had had my own way, Easton Lodge would have been a People's University by now, a

place where the rising generation of the Labour party could study the problems of the Socialist State. I can conceive of no better use to which a great pleasure house can be turned.

Times change, and we must learn to change with them. It is in this clinging to what is dead, either in practice, thought, or custom, that the real danger lies. When we face change boldly it loses all its terrors. The " Stately Homes of England " have had their selfish day. Nothing could be better than that they should make atonement, in emptiness and disrepair, in the hope that a nobler future awaits them.

Side by side with the great country places, the town houses have also suffered. What can be more significant of the new conditions than a stroll from Hyde Park Corner, by the Achilles statue—once the special rendezvous of London's élite—to Marble Arch ? Some of the most exclusive of the Park Lane mansions have been pulled down to make way for hotels or blocks of flats. The lavish entertainment of the Edwardian period will be impossible in the future, for taxation forbids. The burdens that wealth must endure to-day are calculated, in extreme instances, to turn it to poverty. Sometimes it looks as though Edward Bellamy's vision of World Change was coming to pass, and that in some silent fashion of our own, without the sanguinary revolution that accompanied change a hundred and fifty years ago in France, and only a few years ago in Russia, we shall bring about new conditions of life—conditions that will provide for the release and relief of the under-dog.

The point that is so constantly overlooked—to me, it is the one that possesses the greatest significance—is that there is no real reason why anybody in the

world should be poor. We are not suffering from the lack of natural wealth, but from the plethora brought about by faulty distribution. When we recognize this truth, and set our house in order, neither the man with sixty thousand a year nor the fellow with two hundred will be poor.

Reasonable use of the world's resources will suffice for all human needs.

When that time comes, people will look upon the " Stately Homes of England " as we look to-day upon the Pyramids of Egypt, and wonder whether they were worth the trouble of building, and the expense of maintaining, from any but the purely spectacular point of view.

For the upkeep of the lordly mansion, blue blood and hard cash are equally necessary. The parvenu is sadly out of place in the house that has a tradition ; the hostess who cannot entertain, and must live in surroundings of sterile and stagnant state, is in equally bad plight.

If I close my eyes for a moment, I can see before me a great castle (not Warwick) now in the hands of caretakers ; its reception rooms are shrouded in holland coverings, its servants' quarters given over to the dust and cobwebs. Then my thoughts turn to a certain house in Park Lane, and I see the phantom of a dead woman, sitting solitary at a great table in a vast dining-room, with phantom flunkeys in attendance. I am glad that all these things belong to the past.

Shadows ! I know them now for shadows, but I lived among them once, and thought they were real. It was only when I began to sense the difference between them and the reality that was calling to me

from every side, that I began to live in earnest and to seek the difficult, unpopular service.

" What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue ! " I believe Burke said that. Many years ago I decided to pursue shadows no longer. Those who still do as I once did, may yet have their eyes opened before they close finally. They too may join the service that offers misrepresentation and abuse for its reward.

I can watch the passing of most houses in town or country without emotion, but there is one sight that can still rouse me to the anger that is no part of my normal make-up. This is the building in Park Lane where Dorchester House once stood. Oh, the sheer ugliness of the thing that has succeeded the most enchanting house in London ! If those who bought it and put up the new edifice had known Dorchester House, that exquisite Italian palace, within and without, they would have striven to replace it with something of equal beauty. A modern-life example of Beauty and the Beast.

It came very close to me, did Dorchester House ; not only because I enjoyed so much gracious hospitality there, but because of still earlier associations. In the far-off days, when I was quite young, Mr. and Mrs. Holford lived there.

If I am not mistaken, Mr. Holford built the house, and he and his wife were great friends of my father and mother-in-law, the old Lord and Lady Warwick. Those two, together with Lord and Lady Somers, who were the parents of Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, and Lady Henry Somerset, were connoisseurs, and used to pay periodical visits to Italy, where they would collect every beautiful *objet d'art* that appealed to them.

The state rooms at Warwick Castle, the town and country house of the late Lord and Lady Somers, and Dorchester House in Park Lane, bore witness to their taste and the love of the beautiful that these three couples shared.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Holford had a beautiful seat in Dorsetshire ; like Lord Wimborne's great place in the same little-known and comparatively unspoilt county, Weston Birt is now a school.

When Sir George succeeded to Dorchester House, he had the finest treasure palace in all London. He was our frequent guest at Easton, Warwick and elsewhere. An equerry of King Edward, he was one of the handsomest men in society—tall and broad-shouldered, an athlete and a man of remarkable charm. He spoke of how the six friends used to travel in Italy by diligence, visiting out-of-the-way places, always searching for things of beauty that were for sale—in those days, there was no embargo on exports, and prices were not exorbitant. Mr. Holford brought over Italian workmen to paint the ceilings of Dorchester House ; they worked as Michelangelo worked in the Vatican—they loved their work.

A curious feature of Dorchester House, one of the largest houses in London, and the one that distinguished it from Warwick Castle, was that it remained a home, while the Castle was always a museum. It was the fine discrimination of Mr. and Mrs. Holford that created such harmony between the old and the new.

The passing of Grosvenor House, higher up Park Lane, does not touch me ; spacious and magnificent though it was, it was no rival to Dorchester House in point of beauty.

The trouble of the great places that everywhere are

falling into decline is that they were far too extensive in the country and too restricted in town. The reception rooms of the big London houses are famous, and justly so, but the bedroom accommodation is poor. Even at Stafford House, the bedrooms were insignificant, while at Spencer House in St. James's, that great centre of Liberal hospitality, entertainment has been considered first and comfort afterwards.

Nowadays, face to face with the difficulty and expense of securing domestic servants, labour-saving devices are imperative, but of labour-saving the old town house knew little and the old country house less. They were built when the supply of servants was far in excess of the demand.

Some country houses are really charming: Longleat, in Wiltshire, for example, belonging to the Marquess of Bath ; Burghley House, Lord Exeter's home near Stamford, in Lincolnshire, and Major Astor's home, Hever Castle, in Kent.

But others are really so ugly that even the varied treasures they hold cannot redeem them. They were either built or enlarged in those Victorian years when architecture was unspeakable, with just the result one would have expected. Wentworth, the largest country house in England, belonging to Earl Fitzwilliam, has about three hundred bedrooms ! It is a very Vatican of country houses—ugly and uncomfortable, noteworthy only because of its useless size.

The Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth needed all the hospitality of its host and hostess, and all the *objets d'art* within its walls, to atone for its shortcomings ; Eaton Hall, the seat of the Duke of Westminster in Cheshire, is a Victorian monstrosity in which you could lose yourself quite easily.

Welbeck Abbey, which belongs to the Duke of Portland, whose son married a niece of mine, is one of the most extraordinary of all. A former Duke, as eccentric as he was rich, built Welbeck largely underground—the riding school, for example, is subterranean. The present Duke, once so well known on the Turf—he won the Derby—and his wife, one of the beautiful women of her time, and a devoted friend and protector of wild life, are no longer young. They both know that their heir cannot live at Welbeck Abbey. When the next death duties are paid, the place will be too large to maintain. Recognizing this, like the wise people they are, they have taken time by the forelock and are already building a house of moderate size and modern equipment in the park at Welbeck for their heir.

The truth is that, even with considerable wealth, entertainment on the old scale is out of the question.

The labour of running country houses, where the light is made on the premises, and the water comes from your own wells—with no running water in the bedrooms, and one bathroom to each floor—makes the use of these old-time places out of the question.

Moreover, even if hospitality may be said to atone for ugliness, the fascination of the country house is waning, because so much change is possible. In the old days, by the time you reached Chatsworth, Wentworth, or Welbeck, the journey had been so long and so tedious that you were glad to settle down. One could visit only a few places in a year. To-day, the fast car will take you to any of these places quite comfortably in a few hours, and then to another, right across England, with as little expenditure of time. Consequently, people are able to see their friends far

more frequently than they could formerly, though for shorter periods, and they are glad to enlarge their visiting list.

The days have gone when people went to stay for a week, or even longer, in a friend's country house ; in a short time, we shall have the flying machine instead of the motor-car. Few people realize how far flying has developed, but I have friends who think nothing of crossing from London to Paris for lunch, and returning to town in time for dinner. Personally, I think they take their pleasure madly.

I have just opened our Visitors' Book of Easton at the first page. I confess to a certain sinking of the heart at the sight of the long-long-ago, and at the fresh realization it brings to me of the passage of the years.

It is dated December, 1882, and is signed by the visitors who formed the house-party that assembled for the first shooting week after our marriage. The signatures are those of Lady Essex, Lady Arthur Paget, the Countess of March, Lady Gerard, Seymour Wynne Finch, General Sir Arthur Paget, Lord Essex, Lord Gerard, the Earl of March, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Rowton, Francis Bridgeman, Prince Münster, the German Ambassador, and Blanche Gordon-Lennox, my sister.

Counting my husband and myself, we were fifteen, and of all these people, only my sister and myself are living. Nothing remains of that gay gathering save an entry in the visitors' book and two women, then in their first youth, but now in the evening of their days.

I have decided that winter, when the peacocks sit disconsolate on the high branches of the cedars, and the pigeons on the roofs, when the deer stand huddled together in the park beneath trees that have lost their

leaves, is a bad time to turn to a book that records the far-off season when—or so it seemed to us—the world was young.

I will turn to the recollection of other parties.

I remember the earthquake that shook the Midlands many years ago. We happened to have a large house-party at Warwick. I wakened at three in the morning, in response to a violent shaking, and found the whole room behaving incredulously, while I could hear china and crockery going the way of all household goods, but even more rapidly than usual. I had no experience of earthquakes, but I knew that it could be nothing else. I consoled myself, however, with the thought that the masons who had built the castle were picked men, and this calmed me, together with some vague belief in predestination. I went to sleep, and when I woke in the morning the earth had regained its equilibrium.

But the excitement that manifested itself during breakfast was indescribable, and the thing that amused me was that everybody reacted in a different fashion.

The Prince and Princess of Pless, suddenly jolted into wakefulness by finding that the bed had become a rocking-chair, concluded at once that Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest, their fellow-guest and noted for his practical joking, was responsible. The Prince was certain that Lord Herbert had got under the bed and was deliberately shaking it.

" Come out, Bertie—I know it's you ! "

There was no answer, and for a moment or so the Prince and Princess suffered in silence. Then, determined to turn out the intruder, the Prince sprang out of the bed.

" Bertie, this is awfully silly and annoying of you."

It was only when he discovered that there was no Bertie beneath the bed, and that the walls had joined in the peculiar behaviour of the floor, that he realized what was happening.

Not unnaturally, Royalty brings one very close to forms and ceremonies, which are a bulwark against democratic encroachment. I suppose that if you or I belonged to the Royal House we should be brought up to regard that bulwark as something that must be maintained at all costs. At the same time, there was, in the case of King Edward and Queen Alexandra, as there is in the case of King George and Queen Mary, a very marked difference between formal and informal parties. So far as Queen Victoria was concerned, every party was formal, and only a very few people, such as Lord Beaconsfield, my stepfather, Lord Rosslyn, and in the later years, Lord Rosebery, were quite at their ease.

When a King and Queen desire to visit one of their subjects, an intimation to that effect is conveyed by their private secretaries. Only minor Royalties can be approached directly, if they are friends of the people who desire to act as host or hostess, or by application to their equerry. There are some minor Royalties whose normal life is so far removed from gaiety, and who are so beset by etiquette, that they welcome an invitation to a pleasant house where they will be entertained brightly. We have to remember that not all those who belong to the Royal House are wealthy. In passing, I may say that King George shows great consideration for all his relatives—not only for those who have been favoured by fortune. He keeps a friendly eye, and an open house, for them all, and

evidently wishes to maintain the unity of the Royal Family.

The first step taken when the King and Queen are visiting a house is to submit a list of the guests whom the host and hostess propose to invite. If there is any objection to anybody whose name is on the list, the name will be crossed off, and perhaps another will be substituted. This practice, as I have hinted elsewhere, in the case of some of the very old families, has been known to create a slight contretemps. But nowadays there is no occasion for any trouble to arise. If the party is a formal one, orders and decorations are worn.

The King and Queen only come into the room leading to the dining-room when all the guests are assembled. The host leads off with the Queen, and the hostess with the Sovereign, who has already named the lady he will have on his other hand. Royalty will originate conversation, and nobody addresses them without being spoken to. In the reception-room after dinner, nobody leaves until the King and Queen have retired, and nobody sits down if the King or Queen are standing up.

This custom of standing in the Royal Presence is extremely trying for women and elderly men, though oddly enough the great statesmen of my time, as a class, appeared to approve of these traditional practices. The late Lord Rendel tells how he commented to Mr. Gladstone on the custom of Privy Councillors shuffling up on their knees to kiss the Queen's hand, and being charged on no account to raise it. Queen Victoria and her husband, the Prince Consort, were strict in their insistence upon etiquette. Indeed, Sir Lyon Playfair was able to say that, throughout his long

association with the Prince, the Prince never once asked him to sit down.

In my early days, I can remember how delicate women dreaded an invitation to Windsor Castle. In the time of King Edward, Sandringham was entirely different, and remains so to-day in the reign of King George. Guests are invited as personal friends. The King and Queen welcome their guests on arrival in the entrance hall, and see them off. Precedence is observed only at the dinner-table; conversation is general, and the whole atmosphere is that of a gathering of friends.

It is not difficult to guess which of the two types of entertainment appealed to King Edward, who loved to relax, though he could preside over a formal gathering with complete dignity. He would impose no restraint upon those who came to visit him in his capacity as a country gentleman.

It is needless, perhaps, to say that where the Royal Family are the guests of a great country hostess, politics are taboo. In theory, no King is a partisan; in practice, he is a man first and a King afterwards. I am strongly of the opinion that when the Prince of Wales becomes King, Court etiquette will enjoy considerable revision. One thing is certain, change will be bitterly opposed by the followers of the old Conservative tradition, who are still a force to be reckoned with in this respect. They are very definitely of the opinion that the Heir Apparent is too democratic in his outlook.

The Victorians of my little world regarded food with an interest and an enthusiasm that have no counterpart to-day. They were connoisseurs, for whom the best was good enough after they had learnt to know it.

I use this limitation advisedly, because good cooking, like original sin, undoubtedly came from Paris; and until that great world-capital had exported some of its chefs for the benefit of English millionaires, or at least of millionaires resident in England, dinners were often expensive rather than good.

There were some great houses that supplied food that I used to regard as beyond words. Devonshire House was one, Montagu House was another. My brother-in-law's kitchen at Stafford House was much less than perfect, until reformed by Henry Chaplin, that born connoisseur of everything one eats and drinks.

The masters and mistresses of these historic places seemed to think that plenty of costly food made a good dinner, and that, in any case, no dinner under their roof could lack distinction.

How wrong they were! Lord Beaconsfield's friends declared that only his conversation could atone for his cuisine.

You could take it as a rule that the larger the house, and the more numerous the flunkeys, the worse would be the food. Perhaps this was due in no small measure to the distance between kitchens and dining-rooms in those great mansions that have now fallen on evil days.

There were all sorts of rules governing dinners. For example, if you had more than twelve guests, there must be, in addition to two soups and two kinds of fish, etc., two entrées, of which one must be brown and one white. Quails were very popular. I have been at many a dance-supper at which the number of guests ran into three figures, yet every guest had a quail, and there were no quail from Egypt in those days!

The Rothschilds undoubtedly gave the best dinner parties in London, and they established a taste for the refinements of luxury. They had the best chefs, and bottomless purses. But dinners remained far too long until King Edward cut them down, to the great grief of the gourmands who lived for dinner-time.

In my young days, there was a considerable etiquette in connexion with dinner parties. Invitations were always sent three weeks before the day, and arrangements were made by great hostesses that their special functions should not clash. Once you had accepted, only death or a contagious disease would avail as an excuse for non-attendance. You could not change your mind or plead a subsequent engagement, nor could you come late. Punctuality was the very essence of good form, and woe to the guest who arrived after the party had left for the dining-room.

Dinner was served on the stroke of the hour appointed. It was an ordeal for anybody to come in after a course or two had been served, and face the chilling reception that would be forthcoming from a hostess whose table had been disarranged.

I am afraid I was an offender in this respect, because it was always my endeavour to live the twenty-four hours in each day, and I was very optimistic in the matter of appointments, always believing that I could fulfil them, however numerous or protracted. So it happened, more often than I care to remember, that I would be the last to arrive, and would be met with a frigid glance from a disgruntled hostess.

The dinner parties were frightfully formal, but now and again their formality would be relieved by an amusing incident.

I remember when Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Canadian

Premier, and Lady Laurier, were our guests at Warwick Castle. Lady Laurier was a very temperate woman, and did not notice that the footman behind her was replenishing her glass as often as he could find an excuse for doing so. My husband had taken her in to dinner, and, while engaging her in conversation, he did not notice what was happening.

In due season, when the dinner came to an end, I gave the signal for the ladies to rise. Lady Laurier attempted to do so, but found it quite impossible. She turned to my husband with delightful frankness.

"Lord Warwick," she said, "you must help me to join the ladies." Leaning heavily on his arm, she joined us in the great hall, passing all the other men—who, of course, did not see her.

But if dinner was the most formal of all social affairs, lunch was the most delightfully informal gathering anyone could desire. The little world of which I was a part in those days used to gather between the Achilles statue and the Stanhope Gate in Hyde Park, about twelve o'clock on fine days in the season, and would there arrange its luncheon parties on the spot. The men who were available—nearly all seemed to be in the Guards—would come along and be booked, and an informal gathering would follow, from which people could release themselves as soon as they liked. It is a pity that these gatherings have been killed by the restaurant habit, for there is nothing to compare with them in London to-day.

Perhaps the best entertainer of the luncheon hour was old Lady Dorothy Neville. She was not a rich woman, but possessed a great social instinct, and she found that she could gratify it best through the medium of luncheon parties. Her luncheons were

not for the gourmet, since her cook was not a *cordon bleu ;* but to be entertained by the little old lady, who wore such quaint caps, and had retained so much actual prettiness of feature in the evening of her life, was a most delightful experience. Everybody was pleased to come to her table, and enjoy the lively sallies that the years could do nothing to dim.

Her house was in Charles Street, Mayfair, and after lunch we sat on and talked for hours. At her table there gathered politicians, a few writers, and a number of actors. In particular I remember Squire Bancroft, Henry Irving, and the Kendals, representing the stage, and, among journalists, T. P. O'Connor. Lady Dorothy never had more than a dozen people at her board, but the harmony and gaiety that she diffused made every gathering notable, and I always looked forward to an hour in her company.

CHAPTER TWENTY

CONCERNING ROYAL MARRIAGES

The Duke and Duchess of Teck ; great expenses and responsibilities ; a beautiful dancer ; Princess May ; Lord Athlone and his wife ; Prince Francis of Teck ; a " confidential friend " ; the Middlesex Hospital ; the Duke of Connaught ; Hail-fellow-well-met ; the Duchess and her children ; experiences in Canada ; the Duchess of Fife ; Princess Victoria ; Princess Maud ; Queen of Norway ; King Haakon ; the late Duke of Fife ; little Princess Elizabeth ; popular intrusion on Royal privacy ; the last century of Kingship ; England and refugee Royalty ; the King of Rumania ; Mr. Gladstone and the position of Royalty ; The Empress Frederick ; the Queen of Spain ; Ena of Battenberg ; the unhappy Tsarina ; Rasputin ; the ailing young Russian Prince ; defying the laws of nature ; Rasputin's so-called miracles ; possible hypnotic healing ; his sinister prophecy ; modern marriage and divorce ; difficulty of Royal love matches ; Princess Hélène of Orleans.

I HAVE known many charming and clever women, but for sheer delightfulness I have never come in contact with anyone who could rival the Duchess of Teck, Queen Mary's mother. There was something about her that made her the centre of attraction wherever she went. Her personal magnetism was greater than that of any woman I have known.

The Duchess's position was an extremely difficult one, for the Tecks had great expenses and responsibilities, but a very limited income. There was a large family to bring up and educate, and there were a number of personal difficulties with which to contend. Their problem was rendered more acute by the fact that the Duchess's popularity, which was nation-wide, did not altogether please the exalted few.

Although she was not of the stay-at-home *hausfrau* type, of which Queen Victoria approved, that Royal Lady succumbed to her fascination, and the Duchess was the one woman who was not overawed by the Queen.

Both the Duchess and her husband were generous to a degree, and it was part of their temperament that they lived in the moment without thought of the morrow. Thus, not only did they spend what was necessary, but they gave and gave with largeness of heart. Queen Victoria granted them the loan of White Lodge as a residence.

I did not know the Duchess in the days of her youth, but I imagine that she must have been very lovely. Even when she was an old lady her eyes were superb, and she possessed an amazing grace. I can remember the time when she weighed anything up to twenty stone, and could still dance beautifully. She had the most wonderful feet. They were quite small, so that it was incomprehensible how they could support that vast body and yet move with such alluring grace. The fact remains that in the ball-room the best dancers among the women were forced to confess themselves second to the Duchess.

She was fond of me, so I saw a good deal of her and grew familiar with the intimate circumstances of the family. The lifelong friendship between " Princess May " and Lady Eva Greville, my sister-in-law, was due to the fact that the Duchess and her daughter frequently visited my mother-in-law at Warwick.

The Duchess of Teck, in spite of anxieties that would have told very sadly on most women, was always smiling and cheerful, and the sunny quality of her

personality made it a joy to be with her. Nobody could have been so charming as she was, or so whole-heartedly interested in everything. When she stayed with us she would visit the neighbours with me, and leave people with the feeling that they had had a visitor from another planet.

In a world full of backbiting, slander and unkindness, a world wherein people were struggling towards their goal with little regard for anybody who stood in their way, the Duchess moved, a gracious figure, unselfish, urbane, and lovable to the end.

She was exceptionally fortunate in her children, though it was probably her example and her teaching that accounted for the fact that they all possessed such unusually fine characters. The whole world knows that her daughter has made a successful Queen, an ideal wife and mother. Her son, Lord Athlone, who married the Duke of Albany's daughter, was immensely popular and successful in South Africa. The loss of his son, Lord Trematon, evoked sympathy for the parents among the thousands of people who had never seen the boy, but who felt that such parents must have had a delightful son.

Prince Francis of Teck, the Duchess's second son, was a great friend of mine. He was one of the few people to whom one can apply the somewhat old-fashioned term of " confidential friend." But that is exactly what he was—always reliable, always loyal, never losing an opportunity of saying the good word or performing the serviceable act. He was our frequent guest both in town and in the country, and my husband, like myself, was very fond of him, so that we were very happy when he agreed to become godfather to our youngest daughter, Mercy.

Francis of Teck was a keen sportsman, but he was also a collector gifted with taste and judgment.

In the last years of his life he became Chairman of the Middlesex Hospital, and threw himself into the work with rare vigour. I once asked him whether he was not doing too much, and he laughed.

" My trouble is that I shall never be able to do enough ! If I had twice my energy I could not put it to better account."

He was always very careless of himself, and at a time when he had taken a bad chill and should have been in bed he obeyed a summons to Balmoral. When he died suddenly, not very long afterwards, he put a host of friends into the mourning that does not necessarily express itself in funeral wreaths, nor end with the doffing of black garments.

One day in the early summer of 1930 I saw the Duke of Connaught as I was crossing St. James's Street. He had celebrated his eightieth birthday only a few weeks before, and was looking so alert and erect, so bright and debonair, that nobody would have suspected for a moment that he could be within ten years of this age. He has carried on the traditional charm of the Royal Family, and, next to King Edward, is the most popular of Queen Victoria's children.

The Duke of Edinburgh, as I remember him, was diffident and even shy. The Duke of Albany was too much of an invalid to have a fair chance ; while the others of the Royal House have been undoubtedly greatly influenced by the sense of their own status.

But the Duke of Connaught has had a long experience in the army, where he was very popular, and he has been, in spite of a certain natural dignity, one

of the hail-fellow-well-met type, like our present Prince of Wales.

Although Governor-General, he and the Duchess and their children found Canada a welcome respite from the ceremonial of St. James's, and he came into contact with a rougher side of life than falls to the lot of most Royalties. The Princesses Patricia and Margaret made friends and won admirers wherever they went, while the Duchess, who had been overshadowed by the Princess of Wales at the English Court, came into her own in Canada.

Knowing something of the real effect of their visits, and of the Duke's popularity with the French and cosmopolitan society of the Riviera, I find myself wondering whether he and the Duchess could not have saved the position in Ireland if they had been sent to Dublin. From what I know of them I believe that they would. It was suggested, but Queen Victoria imposed an absolute veto. She went to Ireland herself, believing strongly in the power of her own Royalty ; but she would not suffer her children to go there, except as visitors, and not officially as governors.

The Duchess of Fife lived a life that nobody save her husband shared. H.R.H. kept the smallest possible circle of friends, and was tongue-tied before strangers. The Duchess had, I think, only one hobby in life, and that was fishing, though she would turn to music when open-air pursuits were not possible. Hers was such a placid, uneventful life, I do not suppose it was marred by a single act of unkindness to man, woman, or child.

In the days when Princess Victoria was young, Royalty did not enjoy such freedom in the choice of a partner as would be allowed to-day, and it was on

this account that the second daughter of Queen Alexandra elected to remain single.

The third daughter of King Edward, Princess Maud, now Queen of Norway, has undoubtedly enjoyed the gayest and least responsible life of all his children. In her early years at home she was always full of life and laughter. King Haakon, that good-looking, well set-up, and popular man, adores her. She is, they tell me, frankly uninterested in formal Court functions, or duty visits, and all the petty trials that Royalty must endure. Some of her subjects resent this, believing that Royalty was born to be formal. But she loves the open-air life, revels in the loveliness of the fiords, is an expert on skis and a first-class skater. Life for her has been a full and happy adventure, without over-much responsibility, and Prince Olaf, her son, is certainly popular.

I have often heard people comment on the exclusiveness of Royalty, and the late Duke of Fife was sometimes very harshly criticized because of the fashion in which he guarded all the approaches to Mar Lodge. When he and the Duchess were in residence it was said that anybody who came into that countryside was suspect. Much of this comment was both ill-natured and misinformed.

In these days, due to a certain lack of public restraint and the enterprise of photographers, Royalty is besieged. The little Princess Elizabeth and her nurses have been well-nigh mobbed by crowds of idle foolish women in the Park and round the gates of their London home. The approaches to Goldsborough Hall and Harewood House have been beset in like fashion.

It is not only Royalty who suffers ; anybody whose name is before the public, and who chances to have an outstanding residence in town or country, is liable to intrusion in the same way. Consider the crowds that surround the approaches to St. Margaret's and St. George's when there is what is called a " fashionable " wedding. Can anything be more meaningless or unpleasant than this pursuit ? In the old days at Easton, I used to open the roadways through the Park to the public, so that anybody who wished to take a short cut, or to enjoy the beauty of the woodland, could do so without hindrance. But I had to close the gates at last, because so often a charabanc full of people would draw up right in front of the house, merely in order to stare !

If private people must put up with intrusion in this fashion it is easy to see how necessary it remains to give Royalty some little freedom of movement and liberty of action. King Edward made a rule that he was not to be recognized in his clubs in any way. He desired to enjoy the privilege of private membership. A charwoman is entitled to her privacy : why, then, should Royalty suffer unendingly from the unwelcome attentions of the vulgar ? Loyalty and good manners are not incompatible.

The twentieth century may, in all probability, be the last century of Kingship. Consider the changes that one hundred years have wrought in Europe—all in one direction. Our own is perhaps the only country in which the Heir Apparent, indifferent to the protests of the elderly-minded, goes out to meet democracy half-way.

England has long been the house of refuge for Royalty in trouble, and this is hardly surprising when

we remember that ours is almost the only stable and unthreatened monarchy in Europe, and that the ruling House has its cousins in every kingdom. Our island has helped to render revolution innocuous to many rulers. It used to perform a like service for the rank and file of refugees.

Now and again we are faced by an exception to the rule of gracious hospitality, and troubled Royalty is not made welcome, but then it is Royalty's own fault. In the case of the present King of Rumania the powers-that-be held certain views in regard to matters of conduct—and decided accordingly.

I remember that Mr. Gladstone was once asked what he thought would happen if the people of Belgium were to revolt against the elderly Personage whose self-indulgence was for so many years notorious in Europe. Mr. Gladstone was, of all men, the purest in word and thought; the flavour of a grain of what may be described as Gallic salt in a jest was sufficient to bring a frown to his face. But when he was asked this question, he made a truly Gladstonian reply:

"So far as I can remember," he said of this European ruler, "he has always acted as a constitutional monarch." I think this reply throws a curious light on the mind of the great Liberal leader, showing that he considered Royalty as a thing apart. He desired that the Estate of the Realm should be maintained in its entirety, and he did not feel called upon to criticize Royalty on anything but political grounds. Though Queen Victoria held him in scant esteem, he would seldom criticize her, even to his intimates, and then not in relation to her attitude towards himself.

Many people do not realize that the Empress

Frederick, despite anything and everything said to the contrary, was perfectly loyal to Germany.

The position of a princess who marries into a foreign ruling family is always difficult. As soon as she ventures to use her brain, to criticize or offer suggestions, she is accused of disloyalty to the country of her adoption. Can any intelligent person go anywhere without making comparisons and criticisms? Does this criticism of certain institutions or persons imply that they dislike the country, or that they would be willing to manœuvre politics to its disadvantage if they could?

The Empress Frederick objected to certain German institutions, German modes of thought, and German individuals; but there was never a time when she would not have done all that lay within her power for the development of the country. I do not speak without knowledge, for she was my friend and I was well able to judge her attitude.

Even in these enlightened days I doubt whether a Princess who marries a foreign ruler finds the path of progress a smooth one.

Recently we have all been thinking a great deal about the Queen of Spain. Since I began writing these recollections the Spanish Republic has become a *fait accompli*, and Queen Ena and her family are in exile. Whatever one's political views, one cannot but be profoundly moved by the situation of the Queen, who, both as consort and mother, strove so hard, and has been so sorely tried.

I remember Princess Ena of Battenberg as an unusually attractive girl, spontaneous, laughter-loving, and of engaging manner and charm.

Her mother, the younger daughter of Queen

Victoria, I knew at Court, and recall a sufficient number of Queen Victoria Eugénie's traits to realize how difficult she must have found her official position as consort of the King of Spain.

At the time of marriage Princess Ena of Battenberg was a representative type of young English womanhood ; independent in thought, fond of all that was just and humane. Such traits could help her very little at a foreign Court, where the mere fact that she came from another land could cause her to be regarded with a certain reserve, if not suspicion. Her failure to modify or alter the less progressive of the Spanish institutions is the measure of the difficulties that confronted her. I imagine that, like most princesses throughout history, she has had to learn that the wives of foreign monarchs must needs sink their individuality in that of their husbands.

The unhappy Tsarina, whom I knew as a girl, found herself in the same situation, only in far more trying circumstances. I remember her as Princess Alix of Hesse. She was then a wholesome, thoroughly normal person. Indeed, one might have met scores of educated and agreeable girls in Germany of her type. She loved to laugh and joke, and there were certainly no indications of any mystic leanings in her nature.

Years later my son went to Russia with Lord Milner, and there was entertained by the Tsar. The Tsarina was present, but he was unable to recognize in her the woman I had described. Court life had turned her into a nervous wreck, submissive to all manner of influences. Despite the fact that I knew her as a thoroughly rational girl, I cannot help wondering whether her faith in Rasputin was not a matter of

belief in his mystic power rather than in his political worth.

I have no direct means of judging ; but after conversation with mutual friends who were familiar with the Russian Court I am convinced that her friendship with the monk was rooted in a conviction that he could cure her ailing son. The poor woman had no political sagacity, but reacted to Rasputin's influence, foolishly but without guile.

It should be remembered that there were many contributory causes to the sad mistakes made by the Tsarina, while the overwrought state of her nerves was certainly not incomprehensible. For long years, above all things, she had desired to have a son, forgetting the terrible curse that, in her case, was likely to accompany the gift. The little heir to the Russian throne was afflicted with the terrible disease of hæmophilia from birth.

It is not difficult to picture the anguish of the mother who realized that the son she had desired with all her soul was destined to a life of wretchedness almost from the cradle. He could not live like other children ; he dared not run the risk of playing even an ordinary game with those who would have been his playmates in the normal course of things, for fear of an injury that to any other child would have been of no importance, but to him might prove fatal. It is scarcely to be wondered at that her mental balance was so disturbed, and that her behaviour appeared eccentric.

Tsar Nicholas had the blood of the Hesse family in his veins. As a practical farmer I have had to give considerable attention to the laws of nature, and in my opinion he was too nearly related to Princess Alix to produce healthy children.

Tsar Alexander, Nicholas's father, wished him to marry a French princess, a lady who was at that time desired by several princes of Europe, but who made herself, so to speak, ineligible because she insisted upon remaining faithful to the Roman Catholic Church.

The marriage between the last Tsar and Tsarina was purely a love-match and they remained lovers to the very end. So devoted to one another were they that even when affairs of State were in question the Tsar preferred to consult his wife rather than his Prime Minister. It was only for his sake, and for that of her children, that she could have turned to Rasputin the Terrible.

If she believed in his supernatural powers, and there is much evidence to point to the fact that she did, I imagine that she must have inherited the tendency to put her trust in the miraculous from her mother, Princess Alice, Queen Victoria's second daughter. Princess Alice, that woman of more than ordinary gifts, was slightly clairvoyant and psychic.

How far Rasputin's " miracles " were the result of a criminal conspiracy with those who surrounded the Tsar and Tsarina is something that will never be known ; but there can be no doubt that many of the things he did would impress a woman living at such high tension as the Tsarina, who was surrounded by people who undoubtedly played upon her nerves for their own ends.

The monk may have possessed a certain gift of hypnotic healing ; certainly he appears to have cured one of the little Prince's attacks of hæmophilia by something that can be described only as will-power. He is also supposed to have been able to cure him of

minor ailments by means of a few words said over the telephone.

His prophecy that when he fell the Russian dynasty would fall, was fulfilled. How the Tsarina must have suffered when she learnt that Rasputin was dead, with that terrible prophecy ringing in her ears day and night !

The ghastly tale of Rasputin is finished. Out of all the horror of it, but one thing of beauty emerges—he tried to prevent the Great War.

It is sad to think that the few years of life granted to the little Russian Prince were rendered wretched by the curse brought upon him through no fault of his own. It is impossible to disguise the facts about hæmophilia to-day. Needless to say, the disease is not confined to the Royalties of Europe, but is visited upon many families where close inter-marriage has been the custom. At Easton village to-day, there is a child suffering exactly as did the heir to the Throne of all the Russias.

King Edward was warned by the illness of his brother, Prince Leopold, and realized these facts very fully. That is why we are not likely to see in the future many marriages founded upon associations with the " Almanach de Gotha."

This mention of marriage reminds me of a discussion upon the subject in which many speakers ventured the opinion that the time would come when men and women would found their associations upon love, and not upon ceremony, whether religious or civil. The suggestion caused a shock, but it has not been withdrawn on that account.

At all events, there must certainly be reform in our divorce laws. We shall certainly have to overcome

our thoroughly English tendency to observe the letter of the law while letting the spirit take care of itself.

In my younger days the marriage laws were even more stringent than they are to-day, with the result that men and women simply ignored them, and, by tacit understanding, sought their happiness where they could find it.

Members of the Royal Houses of Europe stood only the slenderest chance of being permitted to marry for love. On rare occasions, when it happened that the marriage was a love-match, consanguinity too often caused unhappy consequences.

Princess Hélène of Orleans, daughter of the Comte de Paris, now Duchess d'Aosta, was one of the most distinguished and sought-after women on the Continent. There is no saying how the history of Europe might have been altered if she had not been brought up in the Catholic faith, or had not been one of its strict adherents. She is emphatically one of the world's most notable daughters, and I am told that the Duce himself lends a willing and attentive ear to her advice on many subjects of importance.

It was King Edward's wish that one of his sons should marry this beautiful and gifted Princess. Owing to the religious difficulties, his hope was doomed to disappointment, as those in touch with kings and rulers realize is all too often the case with Royal plans. But it speaks well for his insight into character that, when the Princess was little more than a child, he should have recognized in her a woman born to rule; one fit to stand firmly in the face of responsibility.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE SPADEWORK OF A LIFE—AND AFTER THAT THE DAWN!

Why I dropped out of Court circles; a land that is no longer charted; English social life in Victorian and Edwardian days; a letter from Queen Victoria to Mr. Gladstone; extension of the Franchise; the "Flapper Vote"; our Poor Law a scandal; the climax of the Great War; much has changed for the better; Britain is alive and awake; Ramsay MacDonald and his assistants; the women behind the Cabinet; Labour must look forward; Sir Oswald Mosley; our lost markets; shopping and the banks; I remain an optimist; may the dawn of Socialism come soon!

I HAVE never yet told the simple story of the end of my career in what was known as the "Marlborough House Set"—that endlessly discussed group of men and women.

My happy, careless years there were drawing to an end before the Set was, so to speak, extinguished by the Prince's accession to the throne. When he assumed the enormous responsibilities of that position, King Edward took up the duties associated with it, and they were his first and greatest interest in life. He had been preparing for them for the greater part of half a century, and it is important to remember that he had not been allowed to take even a reasonable part in the conduct of State business. He had enjoyed no official apprenticeship for the task. Mr. Gladstone not only liked but believed in him.

About a year after the King had been on the Throne, I received a visit from Lord Esher one morning. He told me, with charming courtesy and frankness, that he thought it would be well for all concerned if my close connexion with great affairs were to cease,

as it was giving rise to hostile comment which distressed Queen Alexandra. Just before Lord Esher's visit, she herself had written me a letter—a very kind letter—to the same effect.

For a long time past I had been more than a little ill-at-ease, because I could not help thinking that my association with the Set was not compatible with my interest in Socialism. I stood for everything that my friends and my circle repudiated.

King Edward, as Prince of Wales, gracious and kindly though he always was to me, could not understand or sympathize with my views, though these views did not affect our friendship. I had been most scrupulous, since he came to the Throne, in seeking nothing for myself or my friends—an example that some of his intimates failed to follow. This drew upon me the reproof of one of the King's friends, many times a millionaire.

This gentleman asked me bluntly why, in a season when so many favours were being dispensed, I remained so quietly in the background. I could not explain to him, for I am sure he would not have understood. Perhaps I could not explain to myself, but I know that I merely followed my instincts, and that if my time came over again I should do the same thing. The Court never yielded me any sort or kind of personal advantage.

Withdrawal did not break my friendship with King Edward, which continued to the end. Henceforth, however, that friendship was less close, while our meetings, though they continued to within a few weeks of his death, were comparatively few. But there was not then, and there never has been since, any sense of bitterness in my mind. Lord Esher did his duty with tact and discretion.

The closing chapter of a book, even one so largely concerning the lighter side of life as this, must cause the writer to pause and take stock. For though to achieve is granted to few, every author sets out with a definite purpose.

I hesitated for a while to turn back to the past, because I had to travel once again into a land no longer charted, since my correspondence, notes, photographs and books, everything that related to the times about which I wrote, had gone up in flames.

But for that, I could have given many dates and details that would have been of interest, and could have ventured to set down stories that I have refrained from telling, because I can neither date nor document them.

But I have striven at least to picture that curious period of English social life in Victorian and Edwardian days, when the pursuit of pleasure was paramount in the minds of the upper classes. My purpose has been to show the environment against which I had to contend, so as to prepare for the long and inevitable season of change. To realize what life was like in the days of my youth, one can turn to Queen Victoria's letters.

It may be recalled that Queen Victoria was mistrustful of any extension of power, by franchise, to the democracy. In July, 1884, she wrote strongly to that effect to Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Gladstone's purpose, which caused the letter, was to introduce a " Bill for Extending to the Counties the Occupation Franchise and also the Lodger Franchise now enjoyed in the Boroughs." The House of Lords obstructed the measure according to use and wont, and the Queen sided with her peers against the Government. What would Queen Victoria have

said if anybody had hinted to her that, less than half a century later, we should have what is vulgarly called " the Flapper Vote " ? Neither abdication nor a headache would have sufficed to meet such a terrible contingency.

As it was with the franchise, so it was with Labour. Our iniquitous industrial system was still battening complacently upon the toil of underpaid men, women and children. Our Poor Law was a scandal, our countryside was in the hands of the landowners, autocrats for the most part, kind and well-meaning men and women enough, but utterly without any sense of what might be called civic conscience, and firmly convinced that they were the viceregents of Providence.

I do not think they recognized that they were playing the part of tyrants. They thought it was for the good of the country that they should persecute Radicalism and Nonconformity, just as it was good for the peasantry that, from the Petty Sessional Courts where they ruled, they should send a man to gaol for snaring a rabbit, even though that man was a labourer with a wife and large family, living as best he could on a wage of about ten shillings for a sixty-hour week.

In our foreign relationships we were subservient to the Great Powers, while we bullied the small ones. Education was hardly worthy of the name ; farmers could close rural schools for weeks on end when they wanted children for picking their fruit or vegetables. Reaction sat secure in high places. The fathers of my generation spoke with horror of the Chartist Riots, as though they had constituted a real revolution. But since then all that the Chartists asked for has been granted, and England is not one

penny the worse. Time removes the first two letters from " impossible."

I think that the climax of our Victorian stupidity was reached when the hour struck for the Great War —because that War was the fruit of the Entente, and the Entente was the fruit of Imperial jealousies and Royal misunderstandings. The terrible experience which left the world with ten million dead, and nobody (save the statisticians) knows how many thousands of millions of pounds of debt, has at least awakened democracy to the dangers of the old regime, and has roused among the workers of the world a determination that the tragedy shall not have a second act, no matter what sacrifice may be called for to prevent it.

Out of the crash and turmoil of the times, two Labour Governments have arisen. I am not concerned here to appraise or to belaud their achievement. Each has been a minority Government, labouring in the face of enormous difficulties. But because they have, as it were, every man's hand against them, because they must struggle throughout their term, be it long or brief, in the shadow of opposition, they must needs give of their best to the fullest extent of their power.

I look round the world as it is, contrasting it with the world of the days when I was ripe in folly and green in judgment. In spite of the turmoil, the stress and the trouble that surround us, I am conscious of a certain glow of satisfaction at the heart. So much has changed for the better ! Capitalism has been found out ; its accusers are becoming not only vocal but strident. Industrialism, that merciless century-old monster, is being brought slowly but surely within bounds. Formerly the world-forces moved to free

the slaves of other climes ; to-day they turn to free their own.

Our educational system, for all its troubles—and as I write, the echoes of religious dissension are still sounding from Westminster—is a vastly better thing than it was when I started my school at Bigods, in order to supplement primary education and give the children some wider scope, some larger hope of material betterment. The Poor Law has suffered necessary drastic changes. The great menace of unemployment may yet be handled effectively, because so many men of good-will are ready to recognize its manifold ramifications.

It is because Britain is alive and awake that we may contemplate without too great a sinking at the heart the passing of our world markets, the necessity of discovering a new manner and mode of life for the support of our overcrowded millions.

I think the historian will talk of these present years as years of revolution brought about by the War, because, when Europe's misleaders, in their slavish dependence upon the whims and fancies of rulers, suffered the War to break out, our great markets wilted before the storm. Nations that had depended upon us for supplies of manufactured articles found that they were compelled to produce their own, and that, after a while, the production was not difficult.

Ramsay MacDonald, our Premier, is a man of whom the Empire may well be proud, in spite of the outcry of a diminishing privileged class and of politicians who substitute party cries for sober judgment. It is safe to say that no one could have handled the Anglo-Indian Conference with greater skill or wider judgment.

The Premier is a man who, whether by accident or

design, prepared himself for the highest office in the State. He has travelled in India and understands the Indian mind, a fact that has lately stood him in good stead. He has travelled through Europe in the way that is, perhaps, the best of all, the most searching and effective—for, in the old days, when the wife he loved was by his side, they went on walking tours ; they penetrated to remote places, and talked with gentle folk and simple, the folk whose problems he may be called upon at any time to consider.

Again, he has imagination as well as intellect, and a definite strength of purpose. I speak without prejudice. In many respects his way is not my way, nor his innate caution a factor that commends itself to me ; nor is his course of action one I would necessarily take in like circumstances. But that he is a great man, well fitted to lead us in a time of crisis, no one but a fool could deny. I have listened to him on the public platform and in the House of Commons. I have been his guest at Chequers, where he appears, so to speak, as a meal-time host, because when he is not presiding over his table, he is in his study hard at work, or is taking brief relaxation in the beautiful gardens that lie among the shadows of the Chiltern Hills. He impresses his personality upon all with whom he is brought into contact.

He has had able lieutenants too. I count Arthur Greenwood, the late Minister of Health, foremost among them—that tall, slender, keen-eyed man whose voice compels and whose ideals arrest.

Another outstanding figure in the Labour Cabinet was Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, formerly a tower of strength to the Co-operative movement, and to-day a man who has contrived to

make friends with the admirals—a feat that, if I am well-informed, very few First Lords can claim to have accomplished.

In the sphere of foreign politics, Arthur Henderson soon made his mark ; it is a curious tribute to his character that he is popular both in France and in Germany.

There is not much social side to the Labour party. It lacks the money for entertainment of the kind that other parties can provide, and it has no highly developed social sense. But Mrs. Alexander made the Admiralty a social centre for the Progressives, and may claim to have had the best cook in the service of the Cabinet—and Cabinets are far more intimately dependent on cooks than is generally admitted.

Mrs. Alexander's luncheon parties were really delightful functions, at which you met many people who matter. Even the grim Chancellor of the Exchequer allowed himself an occasional hour of relaxation there.

Mrs. Greenwood is a hostess with great charm. Like Mrs. Alexander, she is a pretty woman, and pretty women make admirable hostesses, since they start off with such a definite advantage.

While writing of the Labour leaders, I am reminded of Ishbel MacDonald, the Premier's eldest daughter, a girl who has made a host of friends, who cares nothing for dress and frills, but takes the greatest interest in public life. In the intervals of looking after her father's needs, she is studying to prepare herself for a political career.

Some of the Labour leaders, men like Lord Passfield, who, in spite of his years, can bear the double burden of vast knowledge and exacting duties, have only one

limitation, and that is unavoidable. They belong to the past and the present, while those to whom we must look are the men who belong to the present and can regard the future as something that belongs to them.

I think that Sir Oswald Mosley is the most promising of this younger school. He has the vision without which the people perish ; he has the enthusiasm that belongs to his years, and the enthusiastic following that is attracted by the practical idealist in times of trouble. I do not know whether he will lead the people to the Promised Land—it may be years away for all we know ! But I am sure that he will take them at least over part of the road.

Let no man prophesy, for we are passing through years of revolution, though it is difficult to persuade people to realize this. The old Tories, some of them my friends, many of them my acquaintances and relations, assure me that I am wrong. All that is needed, they hold, is a strong Government, or a strong man—an English Mussolini for choice—to put grumbling people in their places, compel them to work hard and for a low wage. Then all will be well !

If you ask them about our lost markets, if you point out that the world is no longer shopping at the John Bull Store, and shows no intention of returning to the old firm, they take refuge in generalities. They do not know how to answer these questions. Nor do you or I !

To-day we are all becoming aware, in some fashion, however dim, that the hour has struck when co-operation must replace competition, and that the world may well be compelled to admit that, though united we may stand, divided we shall most certainly fall. Modern transport, intercommunication, world markets,

so called over-production—all these things teach us that we cannot treat the fruits of the earth as the special property of the individual, or of a favoured section of the community, but that they must be devoted to human service, since only in that way can humanity be saved.

As I write, on a wet day in London, with my thoughts straying between my page and my country home where the rain always seems inoffensive and there is always some sight or sound to gladden my heart, I recall my morning glimpse of certain West End shops.

There were more than sufficient assistants in those I visited to have attended to four times as many customers as were available—people are not buying! Yet one of the big bankers was telling us a day or two ago that there is so much money in the banks that, if it could only be put into circulation, the industrial position throughout the country would improve immediately. There is only one reason why the money remains in the banks, where I believe, at the moment, it earns one per cent. for the depositor and rather more for the banker, and that is lack of confidence.

It is quite easy for the Tories to say that this lack of confidence was due to the Labour Government; but anybody who mingles a little thought with his speech must know that this cannot be the true reason. The trouble is caused by world-depression and uncertainty, by the failure of an effete individualism to find a solution to our great industrial problems, by the reluctance of men and women to venture upon the road that leads to Socialism, which, as I see it, alone possesses the power to bring healing to the nations.

But in spite of all the delays and the anxieties that beset the times, I remain an optimist. I cannot

help feeling that even those who deny the truth in their speech, recognize it in their hearts, and that even if they are still honestly unable to reconcile their minds to the new idea, the inexorable logic of events must bring the truth home to them.

From every inquiry into existing conditions, one outstanding, undeniable truth issues—the world has sufficient wealth to clothe the naked and feed the hungry!

This wealth could be produced if everybody gave a few hours a day to devoted service, and there would be no lack, even for the teeming millions who crowd these islands. There is sufficient skilled labour now unemployed to remove the slums from the face of our pleasant land and replace them with sightly dwellings; there is food to ensure that no man shall lack sustenance. The world brings forth in superabundance corn and meat, fruit and flowers, base and precious metals, and everything else we want for use and beauty.

But we have elaborated, in the past hundred and fifty years, a cruel and absurd system of manipulation and distribution, in order that the fortunate few may sit in receipt of custom, while the unfortunate multitude slaves from dawn to dusk. This system must be abolished! It stands crumbling, but ominous. We have forged our own chains, and although they grip us strongly still, we are becoming increasingly aware that they are chains, and that they are of our own making.

That is why, in the evening of my long day, I look upon the world with a hope that atones for the troubles that have beset the years. That is why I refuse to be a pessimist, and why I remember that it is always darkest before the dawn.

L'ENVOI

WHEN reading over the proofs of this book, it seemed to me that it was full of desultory thoughts, with only a faint thread of general interest to hold them together. Without the assistance of diaries and letters, it is difficult to arrange memoirs chronologically, and, in addition, many interesting personal details are lost.

Some readers may think that undue prominence has been given to a Royal person in certain chapters, but I was asked to put on paper all I could remember of the Prince of Wales of my day—a personage of unceasing interest to-day and to later generations, as so much recent history seems to have had its roots in those days of political and social development.

When I began to write, it was borne in upon me that the whole of London social life in the 'eighties revolved round Marlborough House, and that all society was led and influenced by the Prince and Princess, so that constant mention was inevitable.

In itself, a second book of Memories went rather against my judgment ; but I received so many pressing invitations to continue writing, that my objections weakened.

In these pages I have not endeavoured to put my own generation against the present, nor to make comparisons. The two are so dissimilar that any such comparison would be useless and misleading.

There is a tendency to exaggerate the condemnation of what is called the Victorian era on the one hand ; while the older generation, now passing on its way,

blames, without understanding, what it considers the excessive licence and lack of conventional morality of the young people of to-day.

Make no mistake, there were strong points and fine characters among the stalwarts of those days. The general average is higher to-day, but we did turn out splendid men and women in the ranks of Statesmanship, Medicine, Literature, Music, and Travel.

Yet it is impossible to deny the strength of the formal conventionality that shackled us, both in public and in the home. To-day a youth or maiden can choose his or her own career ; in the past all this was done for us, very often against our own wishes and inclinations. Many fine lives were ruined and embittered in this way.

I am a strong supporter of modern freedom, though in some directions I think there is a tendency to go too rapidly, for Mother Nature objects to being hurried. But it is all in the right direction. To-day our young people enjoy better education and better health ; while the control of the State is passing from the few to the many, from the men alone to the men and women together. We are beginning to open our eyes to the shame of those so-called Sports that involve cruelty to animals ; there is a marked tendency to help the poor man in his legal struggles with the rich.

All this is to the good, and in this book I have endeavoured to draw a faithful picture of the past, with a passing glimpse at some of the great men and women of those days. Such a picture ought to be put on record by someone who lived in it, someone who knew its weak points as well as its strong ones.

But, most decidedly, it is not my wish to praise that past generation ; I know its failings only too well. I

hold firmly that we *are* advancing, though much spade-work has still to be done. Mere criticism of the past, as of the present, can do no good in itself; we need Construction, and that can only come from education and opportunity.

Both these great factors, education and opportunity, are within the grasp of our youth of to-day, man and woman alike—the future lies with them.

INDEX

A

ABERCORN, Duke of, discretion of, 95.
Actors, amateur, 102.
Adams, Mrs. Bridges, and starving children, 233.
Aeroplane, the, and visiting, 252.
Agricultural labourer, advance of, 214; children of, 243; freedom of, to-day, 244; future of the, 212; prejudices of the, 210, 213; shrewdness of, 212; State insurance of, xv; temperament of, 209; Victorian condition of, 210; wages of, 245.
Ailesbury, Marquess of, and the Bishop, 65.
Ailesbury, Maria, Marchioness of, axiom by, 64; foibles of, 63; footmen and coachmen, interest in, 64.
Albany, Duke of, *see* Leopold, Prince.
Albert, Prince Consort, Baron Stockmar and, 3; health of, 5; early days of, 3; efforts to foster science, 3; idealized by Queen Victoria, 4; influence on architecture, 6; influence over Queen Victoria, 2, 4; noble character of, 3; patron of Arts and Sciences, 5; personality of, 3; Philharmonic Society, interest in, 6; political influence of, 4; seeks increase for power of throne, 5; simple life of, 5; tenderness of, 4.
Alexander, A. V., as First Lord of the Admiralty, 281.
Alexander, Mrs. A. V., as hostess, 282.
Alexander III, Tsar, 13; views for Nicholas II, 272.
Alexandra, Queen, 195; as hostess, 16; etiquette of visits, 254; Rose Day, 17; shrewd judgment of, 16; writes Lady Warwick, 276.
Alfonso, King, Edward VII visits, 14; marriage with Princess Ena of Battenberg, 27.
Alice, Princess, clairvoyant qualities of, 272.
Alix of Hesse, Princess, *see* Tsarina.
Amphytryon Club, the, 71.
Argyll, Duke of, and Scottish superstitions, 152.
Aristocracy, and the City, 201; subservience to, 243.
Ascot, reminiscences of, 168.
Ashburton, Harriet, Lady, a delightful hostess, 95.
Asquith, Rt. Hon. H. H., *see* Oxford and Asquith, Earl of.
Assheton-Smith, Sir Charles, 73.
Astor, Major the Hon. J., 112; and Hever Castle, 250.
Astor, William Waldorf, Viscount, 111; a garden enthusiast, 109; and achieving, 174; and Lady Warwick, 109; and the aristocracy, 112; an embarrassing moment, 115; as guide in Italy, 115; as host, 112; at Hever Castle, 109; at Sorrento, 114;

Astor, William Waldorf, Viscount —*continued.*
bitterness against Socialism, 116; caught out by Andrew Lang, 112; Embankment premises a fortress, 113; his bags of gold, 114; literary critic, 111; mannerisms of, 114; newspaper interests, 109.
Athlone, Earl of, 263.

B

BALDWIN, Rt. Hon. Stanley, akin to Ramsay MacDonald, 184; friendship with Ramsay MacDonald, 136; sturdy character of, 183.
Balfour, Earl of, and Edward VII, 31; and Olympic games, 127; and the "Souls," 126; and week-ends, 97; as Chief Secretary in Ireland, 125; character sketch of, 124; his administration ends, 107; physical courage of, 125; takes up golf, 97; teaches Asquith to ride a bicycle, 126; why he wrote the "Defence of Philosophic Doubt," 125; why never married? 126.
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J., *see* Balfour, Earl of.
Ballin, A., and the Navy, 19.
Bancroft, Squire, 260.
Banks, sterling at, 284.
Bath, Marquess of, and Longleat, 250.
Battenberg, Princess Beatrice of, 270.
Battenberg, Princess Ena of, *see* Spain, Queen of.
Beaconsfield, Earl of, and his friends, 58; and Queen Victoria, 254; his plans for the author, 59; Victoria's preference for, 4.
Beaufort, Duke of, 198.
Bedford, Adeline, Duchess of, 248.
Beit, Alfred, Cecil Rhodes' friendship with, 86; ill-health of, 86.
Bellamy, Edward, 189; his vision coming true, 246.
Belvoir, 241.
Beresford, Lady Charles, a contretemps at Easton, 65.
Berkeley, "Buck," 73.
Bernhardt, Sarah, her marvellous voice, 177.
Besant, Mrs. Annie, an air-traveller, 146; and "Bloody Sunday," 143; humanitarianism of, 145.
Bicycles, use in village-life, 245.
Birkenhead, Earl of, friendship with Winston Churchill, 136.
Blatchford, Robert, and the author, 42; and the Warwick Castle ball, 161; converts author to Socialism, 188; "Merrie England," 189.
Blavatsky, Madam, the "Secret Doctrine," 146.
"Bloody Sunday," 143.
Boer War, criticism of Society nurses by Edward VII, 16.
Bogle, The, at Inverary, 153.
Bohemianism and Society, 79.
Books, influence of, on author, 188; Shern Hall bartered for, 56.
Boston, bon-mot by J. Choate, 119.
Bradlaugh wins Northampton, 234.
Briand, M. Aristide, and his Socialism, 149.
Bridge, Edward VII converted to, 96.
Bridgeman, R. Francis, at Easton, 252.
Bright Young People, not bright enough, 125.
"British Commonwealth," term coined by Cecil Rhodes, 83.
British Empire, Cecil Rhodes' vision, 82.
British Legion, the, and Earl Haig, 223.

Broadcasting, village amenities of, 245.
Brown, James, as High Commissioner for Scotland, 199.
Buccleuch, Duchess of, 48; her exclusive circle, 49.
Buckingham Palace, gold plate at, 10; improvements by Edward VII, 200; Queen Mary's treasures at, 200.
Buckle, George E., editor of *The Times*, 192.
Burke, Edmund, an apt quotation from, 248.
Burnham, Lord, and King Edward VII, 192.
Burns, John, and "Bloody Sunday," 143; and Stead, 147.
Burrows, Herbert, 143.
Business, aristocrats in, 202, 206; banks and, 284; example of Germany, 204; French industry in, 204; future of, 202; opportunities in, 204; reorganization of, 204; state of in England, 284.

C

CAMBRIDGE, Duke of, at Homburg, 39
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H., and Edward VII, 33.
Campbell, Lady Elspeth, and "Johnnie Campbell," 152.
Cards, high play discouraged at Easton, 95.
Carpenter, Edward, an anti-vivisectionist, 139.
Carson, Lord, and the Irish question, 103.
Cassel, Sir Ernest, acquires Compton Verney, 90; and the Navy, 19; at Brook House, Park Lane, 91; friendship with Edward VII, 90; organizing ability of, 90; striking likeness to Edward VII, 92; support of hospitals, 90.
Caton-Woodville, pictures esteemed by Edward VII, 94.
Chamberlain, Joseph, visit to Chatsworth, 46.
Chancellor, F. B., quotation from, 2.
Chaperones, Victorian, 198.
Chaplin, Charlie, and H. G. Wells, 181; appreciation of Mary Pickford, 181; as "Noah," 182; at Easton, 180; secret sorrow of, 181.
Chaplin, Viscount, wins the Derby, 69; a connoisseur in food, 71; a fearless rider, 69; as President of the Board of Agriculture, 70; his broken engagement, 69; marriage to Lady Florence Leveson-Gower, 70.
Chartist Riots, the, 278; aim now achieved, 278.
Chatsworth, 241.
Child Mortality, rural reduction of, 211.
Choate, Joseph, a real Middle-West American, 118; as Ambassador, 118; at Buckingham Palace, 118; on England, 118; visit to Warwick, 119.
Cinema, Edison's prophecy *re*, 116; future in education, 117; value in village life, 245.
Circus, the, and wild animals, 100.
Churchill, Lady Randolph, becomes Mrs. Cornwallis-West, 81; the training of Winston, 81.
Churchill, Lord Randolph, and the Fourth Party, 66.
Churchill, Viscountess, Court recollections of, 63; views on Prince Consort, 3.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston, a national asset, 82; and Cecil Rhodes, 81; as a boy, 81; discusses his change-over, 81; early career of, 81; friendship

Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston—*continued.*
with Lord Birkenhead, 136; heckling the Duke of Devonshire, 81.
Clarendon, Earl of, discretion of, 95.
Clemenceau, Georges, and Sir John French, 216; on Lloyd George, 121; on preparedness for war, 218; on Woodrow Wilson, 121; temperament of, 217.
Cliveden, amenities of, 99.
Clynes, John, and starving children, 233.
Commons, House of, future influence of, 26.
Connaught, Duke of, and Ireland, 265; and the Army, 264; as Governor-General in Canada, 265; his eightieth birthday, 264; popularity of, 264.
Conservatism in Victorian days, xiii.
Conservatives and the Peerage, 230.
Cooking, at Society houses, 257; the art of, 257.
Cornwallis-West, Mrs., *see* Churchill, Lady Randolph.
Coronation Oath, amendation of, 28.
Country House entertaining, scale of, 39.
County Councils, rural activities of, xv.
Cowes, Edward VII at, 98; racing at, 170.
Crane, Walter, at Easton, 234; the cartoonist of Socialism, 233.
Crewe, Marchioness of, 133.
Criticism, literary, opinion of, 191.
Curzon, Viscount George Nathaniel, a brilliant conversationalist, 128; a childish prank on, 129; a tragically misunderstood man, 127; as Viceroy in India, 127; character sketch of, 127; Far Eastern travels, 128; friendship with Lady Warwick, 128; work a panacea, 128.

D

Dalhousie, Countess of, 42.
Dalton, Dr. Hugh, at Foreign Office, 236.
d'Aosta, Duchess, advises Mussolini, 274; and the Royal family, 274; distinguished character of, 274.
Dean, Mercy, Lady, on the stage, 80.
de Broke, Lord Willoughby, as horseman, 73.
Debs, Eugene, a great sociologist, 123.
de Clifford, Baroness, 42.
"Defence of Philosophic Doubt," why Balfour wrote, 125.
de Grey, Lord and Lady, *see* Ripon, Marquess and Marchioness of.
de Martini, pictures admired by Edward VII, 94.
Democracy, rise of the, 25; triumph of the, 203; Victorian servitude of, 232, 242.
Depew, Chauncey, a clever raconteur, 119; and cocktails, 119.
Derby, Earl, at Newmarket, 167.
Desborough, Lord, a naturalist, 172; enthusiastic sportsman, 171.
Detaille, Edouard, and Edward VII, 94.
Devonshire, Duchess of, 48; an affecting incident, 77.
Devonshire, Duke of, a hunting incident, 77; and Chatsworth, 250; and Winston Churchill, 81; a splendid type, 106.
Devonshire House, demolition of, 106; some famous events, 107.

Disraeli, *see* Beaconsfield, Earl of.
Distribution, faulty, 247.
Divorce laws, reform of, 273.
Dixie, Lady Florence, an expert rider, 73.
Dole, the Victorian counterpart, 242.
Dorchester House, once finest treasure palace in London, 249; painted ceilings of, 249; passing of, 248.
Duchess, the Double, 76.
Duff-Cooper, Lady Diana, on the stage, 80.
Dunraven, Earl of, and yachting, 98.
Duse, a comparison, 178.

E

Earthquake at Easton, 253.
Easton, and trippers, 267; a People's University, 245; as Socialist centre, 235; bird sanctuary at, 145; condition of, 56; earthquake at, 253; Ellen Terry visits, 177; fire at, 92; losses by fire at, 277; monkeys at, 157; partial closing of, 241; stables at, 169; taking possession of, 56; theatre at, 177; tree planting at, 97; village experiment at, 211; Visitors' Book at, 252; week-ends at, 98.
Edison, Thomas, and education, 116; prophecy *re* cinema, 116; seeing the world by cinema, 117.
Education, advances in, 280; changed outlook needed, 204; fallacies of, 202; farmers retard, 278; progress of rural, 212.
Edward VII, accession of, 275; affection for Alexander III, 13; and a newspaper canard, 19; and artists, 94; and Baron Stockmar, 4; and Coronation Oath, 28; and "Fisher" Programme, 19; and Foreign Affairs, 27; and "Guards" case, 27; and his Prime Ministers, 33; and inter-marriages, 273; and literature, 94; and Lloyd George, 20; and music, 34; and Nicholas II, at Reval, 13; and precedence, 26; and Royal Yacht Squadron, 98; and Spanish Royal wedding, 27; and the Church, 21; and the French, 18; and the House of Lords, 21; and the Opera, 93; and the Press, 192; appreciation of Countess of Warwick, 16; arduous labours of, 34; as public speaker, 17; author's last meeting with, 22; at Cowes, 98; at Homburg, 39; at Marienbad, 40; at Newmarket, 167; at Sandringham, 256; death of, 22; devotion to duty, 17; differs with Lord Lansdowne on Foreign Affairs, 31; encourages musical art, 93; enjoyment of dinner parties, 94; estimate of German organization, 11; etiquette of visits, 254; fondness for visiting Easton, 14; friendship with Earl of Warwick, 15; friendship with Rothschilds, 86; friendship with Sir Ernest Cassel, 90; Gladstone's belief in, 275; handling of Foreign Affairs, 32; his personal resources, 34; his physical courage, 18; his tact, 35; incognito at clubs, 267; last days of, 20; last visit to Paris, 20; leisure at Easton, 97; love of a joke, 34; love of gardening, 15; moral courage of, 18; opposes traffic in old horses, 17; opposition to, in Foreign Affairs, 32; preferences of, 17; restriction of activities, 2; retorts with "Sousa," 34; the *Britannia*,

Edward VII—*continued.*
98; the *Victoria and Albert*, 98; unceasing interest in, 286; Victoria's austerity toward, 1; view of Lady Warwick's Socialism, 276; views for Princess Hélène of Orleans, 274; visits King Alfonso, 14.
Edwardian Period, lavish entertaining in, 246.
Edward, Prince of Wales, accessibility of, 267; an economic ambassador, 9; a practical democrat, 6; a seeker after truth, 7; democratic outlook of, 256; friendship with Ramsay MacDonald, 6; in Great War, 6; public life of, 35; revision of etiquette, 256.
Elizabeth of York, Princess, popularity of, 266.
Ellesmere, Countess of, 48.
Ely, Marchioness of, views on Prince Consort, 3.
Ena of Battenberg, *see* Spain, Queen of.
England, the Stately Homes of, difficulties of maintenance, 239; have had their day, 246.
Entente Cordiale, 18; and the Great War, 279; an opinion on, 11; author's apprehension *re*, 12.
Epsom, experiences at, 168.
Epstein, and Cunninghame Graham, 144.
Esher, Viscount, and Edward VII, 30; a tactful correspondent, 276; writes Lady Warwick, 275.
Essex, Earl and Countess of, at Easton, 252.
Etiquette, of invitations, 258; Royal, 254.
Europe, a century of change, 267.
Exeter, Marquess of, and Burghley House, 250.

F

Factories, English and German contrasted, 185.
Families, the old, plight of, 232.
Farmers, compensation for, 245; plight of, xv; subservience of, 244.
Farm labourers, wages of, xv.
Fashions, then and now, 160.
Fife, Duke of, exclusiveness of, 266.
Fife, Duchess of, love of angling, 265; secluded life of, 265.
Finch, Seymour Wynne, at Easton, 252.
Firr, Tom, famous Quorn huntsman, 73.
Fisher, Lord John, at Reval, 14; trust in, by Edward VII, 19.
Fitzwilliam, Earl, and Wentworth, 250.
"Flapper Vote," the, 278.
Foreign Affairs, interest in by Edward VII, 27.
Foreign Office, modern receptions at, 50; splendour of receptions, 49.
Foreign Relations, Britain's attitude in, 278.
"Fourth Party," the, 66.
France, Anatole, on happiness, 174.
Frances, Countess of Warwick, *see* Warwick, Frances, Countess of.
Franchise Bill, the, Queen Victoria's mistrust of, 277.
Frederick, Empress, 228; and German characteristics, 269; interests of, 12; loyalty of, 269.
French, Sir John, *see* Ypres, Earl of.
Gage, Viscount, a practical joke on, 172.
Garden of Friendship, Easton, 41.
George V, and unity of Royal Family, 255; as guest, 255; consideration of, 254; etiquette of visits, 254; Henley Regatta, interest in, 99; public life of,

George V—*continued.*
35; rebuke from, 231; work for internal welfare of Great Britain, 8.
George, Lloyd, Rt. Hon. D., 230; and Edward VII, 20; appreciation of, 136; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 107; Conservative hopes in 1905, 108; early oratory of, 136; introduces badly needed reforms, 107.
Gerard, Lord and Lady, at Easton, 252.
German Naval Bill, 19.
Ghosts, family, 152, 153.
Gilbert, Alfred, a great sculptor, 80; the Terry Memorial at Easton, 177.
Gilchrist, Connie, 198.
Gladstone, W. Ewart, 4, 255; and Edward VII, 31; and Leopold of Belgium, 268; and Liberal Peers, 230; and the workers, 91; belief in Edward VII, 275; letter from Queen Victoria, 277.
Glenesk, Lord, 192.
Glyn, Mrs. Elinor, a clever gardener, 159; analysis of her books, 159; at Easton, 158; at Hollywood, 159; death of her husband, 159; her books, 158; her marriage, 158; Lady Warwick launches on career, 158.
Goodwood, a visit to, 168
Gordon-Lennox, Lady Algernon, at Holyrood, 199; at Easton, 252.
Gorst, Sir John, and starving children, 233.
Government offices, condition of, 237.
Grace, W. G. at Easton, 173; modesty of, 173.
Graham, R. B. Cunninghame, and "Bloody Sunday," 142; and Epstein's "Rima," 144; dedicates bird sanctuary at Easton,
Graham, R. B. Cunninghame—*continued.*
145; lover of horses, 144; prison experiences, 143; protagonist of Labour, 143; supports Scottish Nationalism, 144; work in Great War, 144.
Grand Opera Syndicate, the, 163.
Grant, Lady Sybil, as caravaner 133; at the Derby, 133.
Granville, Countess of, her "At Homes," 51.
Gratuities, scale of, 96.
Great Britain, a panacea for, 285; a refuge for Royalty, 267; co-operation to replace competition, 283; her Foreign Relationships, 278; her markets, 283; much changed for the better, 279; now alive and awake, 280; silent revolution in, 246; sociological changes in, 283; waning business in, 284.
Great Estates and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 240.
Great London House disappearing, 106.
Great War, and production, 280; causes of, 279.
Greenwood, Arthur, and slum clearance, 236; as Minister of Health, 28, 236; on "the easier job," 237; on unhealthy Government offices, 237.
Greenwood, Mrs. Arthur, as hostess, 282.
Greenwood, Frederick, and Lord Beaconsfield 195.
Greville, Lady Eva, friendship with Queen Mary, 262.
Greville, Guy, *see* Warwick, Guy, Earl of.
Greville, Sir Sidney, 29; ambitions of, 66; and Edward, Prince of Wales, 67; and the Fourth Party, 66; as art collector, 67; as equerry to Edward VII, 67;

Greville, Sir Sidney—*continued.*
as private secretary to Marquess of Salisbury, 67; as private secretary to Queen Alexandra, 67; as private secretary to Sir John Gorst, 66; deals with "a chastened siren," 68; detestation of Socialism, 67; golden silence of, 67.
Grey de Wilton, Viscount, 73.
Grey of Fallodon, Earl, a devoted naturalist, 172; and the Great War, 172.
Grosvenor House, 249.
Guesde, Jules, and Socialism, 149.

H

Haakon of Norway, popularity of, 266.
Haddon Hall, 241.
Haig, Earl of, abhorrence of poison gas, 223; and Sir John French, 222; characteristics of, 222.
Haldane, Viscount, a letter from, 225; and education, 225; and Germany, 226; and the War, 224; defence of, 225; his prescience, 225; trust in, by Edward VII, 19.
Halton, Royal Air Force at, 90.
Harcourt, Sir W. Vernon, 4.
Hardie, Keir, an incident, 234.
Hardy, Thomas, 190.
Hartington, Marquess of, *see* Devonshire, Duke of.
Hartshorn, Vernon, 186.
Hélène, Princess, of Orleans, *see* d'Aosta, Duchess.
Henderson, Arthur, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 282.
Henley Regatta, Royal interest in, 99.
Hever Castle, gardens at, 110; W. W. Astor's precautions at, 110.
Highland superstitions, 152.
Historic Mansions, anachronistic, 247; decay of, 245; difficulties of maintaining, 240; dust and cobwebs, 247; etiquette of invitations, 258; fishing cottage preferred, 241; lack of amenities in, 251; menus at, 257; passing of the, 240; poor cooking at, 257.
Holford, Sir George, equerry to Edward VII, 249.
Holford, Sir George and Lady, at Dorchester House, 248; collectors of *objets d'art*, 248; their seat in Dorsetshire, 249.
Holyrood, its modern comfort, 200.
Homburg, Edward VII at, 39.
Hostesses, and Royal visits, 44; political, 44.
Houghton, Lord, and the Classics, 59.
House, Colonel, and H. G. Wells, 122; at Warwick Castle, 122; on Woodrow Wilson, 122; Woodrow Wilson's "shadow," 121.
Hudson, W. H., 190, 194.
Hunting, experiences in, 169; in Ireland, 169.
Hyndman and Stead, 146.

I

"Ideal Constitution," the, for Great Britain, 5.
Imperialism as envisioned by Cecil Rhodes, 83.
Industrialism, after a century and a half, 285; curbing of, 279; some plans for, 285.
Irving, Sir Henry, 260; nervousness cured by Ellen Terry, 178.
Irwin, Lord, disinterestedness of, 184.
Isaacs, Mr. Justice, Australia, significance of recent appointment, 26.

J

James, Mrs. Willie, an amateur actress, 102.
Jaurès, M. J., his Socialism, 149.
Jews and the Social set, 40.

K

Kendals, The, 260.
King, H. J., early career of, 86.
Kingship, a prophecy, 267.
Kitchener, Earl, and Ben Tillett, 222; as collector of antiques, 221; character sketch of, 220; health of, 221; his lament, 221; in 1914, 221.
Knollys, Sir Francis, and Edward VII, 30.

L

Labour, and industrial system, 278; their governments, 279; tragedy of, 186.
Labour Government of 1931, 230.
Labour movement, early interest in, 229; Victorian view of, xiv.
Labour Party, growing influence of, 108; social estimate of, 231.
Lambourne, Lord, an enthusiastic gardener, 100; and Humanitarian movement, 100; as Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, 100; as raconteur, 101.
Land problem, solution of the, 202.
Landed proprietors, decline of, 107.
Lang, Andrew, corrects W. Waldorf Astor, 112.
Langtry, Lily (Lady de Bathe), a conversation with, 179; and Lady Londonderry, a comparison, 179.
Lansbury, George, at Whitehall, 236; and those railings, 237.
Lansdowne, Marchioness of, 48; a delightful hostess, 95; her flair for entertaining, 49.
Lansdowne, Marquess of, and Foreign Affairs, 31, 32.
Laurier, Lady Wilfred, Earl of Warwick as friend in need, 259.
Laurier, Sir Wilfred and Lady, at Warwick Castle, 259.
Lawrence, Miss Susan, a splendid type, 236.
Leinster, Duchess of, 42.
Leopold of Belgium at Queen Victoria's funeral, 14, 268.
Leopold, Prince, Duke of Albany, a proposed marriage alliance, 59; delicacy of, 61.
Leveson-Gower, Lady Florence, marriage to Lord Henry Chaplin, 70.
Lewis, Sir George, an opinion of, 105; on work as a safety-valve, 106.
Liberal Peers and Edward VII, 30.
Liberals and the Peerage, 230.
Little People, the, 152.
Lockwood, Mark, *see* Lambourne, Lord.
Lodge, Sir Oliver, a great physicist, 139; and his son Raymond, 139; and Spiritualism, 140; high moral purpose of, 184; his unselfishness, 140; sociological value of his discoveries, 141.
Londonderry, Marquess of, and Lord Carson, 103.
Londonderry, Theresa, Marchioness of, 48; and the Liberal-Conservative association, 103; and yachting, 99; an exceptional hostess, 49; a remarkable personality, 103; a true Die-hard, 103; death of, 104; political sagacity of, 105.
London mansions, demolition of, 246.
Lonsdale, Earl of, a great sportsman, 72; and circus animals, 76; and fox hunting, 75; and

Lonsdale, Earl of—*continued.*
the International Horse Show, 75 ; introduces "sulkies," 74 ; Master of the Quorn Hunt, 72 ; Master of Woodland Pytchley Hunt, 72 ; stables at Barley Thorpe, 73.
Lords, House of, diminished influence of, 25.
Lowther, Hugh, *see* Lonsdale, Earl of.

M

MacDonald, Miss Ishbel, her political career, 282.
MacDonald, Rt. Hon. Ramsay, akin to Stanley Baldwin, 184 ; at Chequers, 281 ; European travels of, 281 ; Prince of Wales's friendship for, 6 ; qualities of, 281 ; reliable judgment of, 280.
Manchester, Louise, Duchess of, a taciturn personality, 76 ; becomes Duchess of Devonshire, 76.
Manning, Cardinal, 21.
March, Countess of, 42.
March, Earl and Countess of, at Easton, 252.
Margaret of Connaught, Princess (Crown Princess of Sweden), in Canada, 265.
Marienbad, Edward VII at, 40.
Marjoribanks, Lady Fanny, 48.
Marlborough House, a ball at, 54.
Marlborough House Set, the, 37 ; author's severance from, 275 ; Press adulation, 38 ; rule of, 42.
Marriage, and Royal Houses of Europe, 274 ; the future of, 273 ; Victorian views on, 274.
Mary, Queen, 261 ; a practical mother, 8 ; as guest, 255 ; at Warwick Castle, 262 ; early days of, 262 ; etiquette of visits, 254 ; friendship with Lady Eva Greville, 262 ; slumming, 8 ; treasures at Buckingham Palace, 200.
Maud, Princess, *see* Norway, Queen of.
Mayflower, the, a comparison, 232.
Maynards, the, 56.
McMillan, Rachel and Margaret, nursery schools at Deptford, 155.
Meissonier, Edward VII's admiration of, 94.
Melba, Madame, 163.
Melbourne, Lord, Victoria's preference for, 4.
Melchett, Lord, and the workers, 238 ; a man of vision, 238.
Melton Prior, Edward VII's friendship for, 35 ; introduced to William II, 35.
Mental deficiency, rural incidence of, xvi.
Mentmore, 241.
Mills, Lady Mary, 42.
Milner, Viscount, visits Nicholas II, 270.
Modjeska, Madame, flexibility of voice, 178.
Morris, William, 143, 190, 233.
Morrison, Herbert, as Minister of Transport, 235 ; on L.C.C., 235.
Mosley, Sir Oswald, character sketch of, 283.
Motor-cars and country-house visiting, 241, 251.
Mull, Isle of, its witches, 153.
Münster, Prince, at Easton, 252.
Mussolini, a reminiscence of, 149 ; consults Duchess d'Aosta, 274.

N

Nationalization and the land problem, 202.
Neville, Lady Dorothy, brilliant guests of, 260 ; her great social instinct, 259.
New Club, the, a Victorian night-club, 197.
Newmarket Heath, habitués of, 167 ; in the 'eighties, 166 ; racing at, 168.

Nicholas II, Tsar, and consanguinity, 271 ; father's matrimonial plans for, 272 ; home life of, 272 ; marriage of, 272.
Night-club, a Victorian, 197.
Night-clubs, 102 ; freedom of, 197 ; will end through boredom, 103.
Noble landowners, apprehensions of, 25.
Norfolk, Duke of, as Postmaster-General, 53 ; receptions of, 53.
Northcote, Sir Stafford (later Earl of Iddesleigh), 4.
Northumberland, Duke of, a typical Die-hard, 209.
Norway, Queen of, early years of, 266 ; expert on skis and skates, 266.
Novikoff, Madame, 142.

O

O'Connor, T. P., and Lady Dorothy Neville, 260.
Olaf, Prince, popularity of, 266.
Oliphant, Mrs., and yachting, 99.
Ormonde, Marquess and Marchioness of, and yachting, 98, 99.
Osborne, Bernal, and the Classics, 59.
Outspoken Review, author's plans for the, 207.
Owen, Hugh, 73.
Owen, Roddie, 73.
Oxford and Asquith, Earl of, a misunderstanding with Lord Rosebery, 133 ; and Edward VII, 33 ; as Prime Minister, 33 ; taught bicycle riding by A. J. Balfour, 126 ; the 1905 Government, 107 ; visit to Edward VII at Biarritz, 19.

P

Paget, Gen. Sir Arthur and Lady, at Easton, 252.
Palmer, Lynwood, picture of Minoru presented to Edward VII, 94.
Palmerston, Viscount, 4 ; bon mot by, 47.
Pankhurst, Mrs., statue to, 156.
Park Lane, its changing aspect, 246.
Parratt, Sir Edward, and Edward VII, 34.
Parsons, Nancy, acting name of Lady Mercy Dean, 80.
Passfield, Lord, qualities of, 282.
Patricia, Princess, in Canada, 265.
Peel, Sir Robert, on Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, 4.
Peerages, Party comparisons, 230.
Petty Sessions and the peasantry, 278.
Pickford, Mary, an opinion by Charlie Chaplin, 181.
Pigeon shooting, 51.
Playfair, Lord Lyon, on Royal etiquette, 255.
Pless, Prince and Princess of, in earthquake at Easton, 253.
Pless, Princess Henry of, an amateur actress, 102.
Poachers, punishment of, 244.
Poison gas, and peace propaganda, 224 ; horrors of, 223.
Political hostesses, 44 ; dominant in politics, 45 ; inter-party friendships, 46 ; power of, 45 ; their *quid pro quo*, 45.
Political receptions, cost of, 52 ; magnitude of, 48.
Political rivalries, 107.
Politics in village life, 212.
Poor Law, drastic changes in, 280 ; views on, 278.
Portland, Duke of, and Welbeck Abbey, 251 ; modern house at Welbeck for heir, 251.
Post, Mrs., as hostess, 119.
Poverty, fundamental cause of, xiii ; no reason for, 246.

Precedence at Sandringham, 256; Lady Warwick in a dilemma, 101.
Press, the, and Edward VII, 192; a salutary corrective, 194; closer association with, 194; ignored by Victorian aristocracy, 192, 193; social correspondents of, 194.
Primrose, Lord Neil, death of, 131.
Prince Consort, the, *see* Albert, Prince Consort.
Prince of Wales, Edward, *see* Edward VII.
Prince of Wales, present, *see* Edward, Prince of Wales.
Progress, a comparison in, xiv.

Q

Queen's Nurses, rural value of, 211.
Quorn Hunt, the, 169.

R

Racing Set, the, 165.
Ramsay, Princess Patricia, *see* Patricia, Princess.
Rasputin, and the Tsarina, 270; efforts to prevent Great War, 273; his "miracles," 272; influence of, 271; power of hypnotic healing, 272; prophesies downfall of Russia, 273; telephonic curing, 273; Tsarina's belief in, 272.
Rathenau, Walter, 227; a clear thinker, 184; assassination of, 186; on English factories, 184.
Rayleigh, the Dowager Lady, and the Cottage Nurses, 211.
Rendel, Lord, on Royal etiquette, 255.
Resources, world, ample, 247.
Reszke, Edouard de, 163.
Reszke, Jean de, 163.
Reval, Royal visit to, 14.
Rhodes, Cecil, advises Winston Churchill, 81; and the author, 84; a talk on happiness, 85; enthusiasm for Imperialism, 82; fails with Stead, 148; inception of the scholarships, 84; personality of, 84.
Richmond, Duke of, at Easton, 252.
Rickets, rural incidence of, xvi.
Ripon, Marchioness of, her courage, 164; interest in Grand Opera, 163.
Ripon, Marquess of, a fine shot, 163; and the Grand Opera Syndicate, 163.
Rodin, his likeable nature, 174; on happiness, 174.
Ronald, Sir Landon, 93.
Ronalds, Mrs., interest in music, 93.
Roosevelt, President, and sport, 120; his social sense, 120; on government, 120; "tells England," 121.
Rosebery, Countess of, her charm and mental alertness, 131.
Rosebery, Earl of, 33; a misunderstanding with Asquith, 133; and horse-racing, 130; and Queen Victoria, 4; as Prime Minister, 135; a victim to insomnia, 131; character sketch of, 130; Gladstone's estimate of, 135; his speech to farmers, 132; marriage of, 130; political sagacity of, 135; Victoria's preference for, 4, 135.
Rosslyn, 4th Earl of, and Queen Victoria, 254; as High Commissioner for Scotland, 199; as raconteur, 57; as trustee at Easton, 55; his brilliance, 55.
Rothschild, Lord Alfred, 51; a connoisseur of life, 86; an accomplished host, 90; and the theatre, 87; beauty of Halton, 89; his hospitality, 87; in Hyde Park, 87.

Rothschild, Baron Ferdinand de, hospitality of, 88; princely incident at Waddesdon Manor, 88; Zoo at Waddesdon Manor, 89.
Rothschilds, the, 86; as hosts, 51; excellence of dinners, 257; friendship with Edward VII, 86; political week-ends, 98; sympathy with the poor, 88.
Rowton, Lord, at Easton, 252.
Royal Air Force, Headquarters at Halton, 90.
Royal prerogative, the, and the great families, 24; Edward VII on, 27.
Royal Presence, kissing hand, 255; standing in, 255.
Royal residences, Edward VII gives an opinion on, 15; then and now, 200.
Royal Yacht Squadron, and Edward VII, 98; Royal patronage of, 98.
Royalty, dangers of inter-marriages, 273; etiquette of visits, 254; penalties of popularity, 267; results of entertaining, 39.
Rumania, King of, stay in England, 268.
Rural districts, changes in, 213.
Rural movement toward cities, xv.
Russell, John, Earl, Victoria's preference for, 4.
Russia, downfall of, prophesied by Rasputin, 273.
Russia, Empress Marie of, 195.
Rutland, Duke of, and rights of Peers, 105; a War-talk, 227.
Rutland, Violet, Duchess of, and Alfred Gilbert, sculptor, 80; skill as artist, 78.

S

Sala, Mrs. G. A., 207.
Salisbury, Marchioness of, 48; splendour of receptions at Foreign Office, 49.
Salisbury, Marquess of, and Edward VII, 31; and Governmental positions, 24; and the Press, 195; as Prime Minister, 31; as writer, 192; Labouchere's witticism anent, 24; prescriptive rights of, 24; refused admittance to Casino, Monte Carlo, 51; simplicity of, in dress, 50; Victoria's preference for, 4.
Salisbury, Marquess and Marchioness of, an appreciation, 50.
Sanderson, Cobden, a friend to Socialism, 234.
Sandringham, freedom of, 256; precedence at, 256.
Sargent, why gave up portraiture, 175.
School children, meals for, 214.
Schools, the great, a hint to, 206.
Snowden, Philip, 187, 282.
Snowden, Mrs. Philip, interest in music, 231; social recognition of, 231.
Socialism, author's satisfaction in, 43; future of, 284.
Society, prejudices of, 40 rendezvous in Hyde Park, 259.
Schreiner, Olive, 189.
Scottish Nationalism, R. B. Cunninghame Grahame's support of, 144.
Servants, precedence among, 243.
Shaw, G. Bernard, and H. G. Wells, 151; production of *St. Joan*, 152; "secret sorrow" of, 151; sporting offer by, 145.
Shaw, Mrs. G. Bernard, her devotion, 151.
Shern Hall, Walthamstow, lost to the family, 56.
Shopkeepers, victimization of, 243.
Shooting in the Highlands, 99.
Sinclair, Upton, and the Trusts, 148; his "fighting" books, 148; his remarkable personality, 148.

Snell, Lord, a farm-hand, 186.
Society weddings, crowds at, 267.
Somers, Lord and Lady, connoisseurs of art, 248.
Somerset, Lady Henry, 248.
" Souls," Balfour as one of the, 126.
South African magnates, 85.
Soveral, Marquis de, and Edward VII, 19.
Spain, Queen of, as a girl, 269 ; her marriage, 27, 270 ; in exile, 269.
Spencer House, 250.
Spencer, Lady, 48.
Spender-Clay, Mrs. Pauline, 111.
Sport, worship of, in schools, 202.
Stafford House, 250.
Stately Homes of England, the, 239.
Stead W. T., advice of, to author, 188 ; and " Bloody Sunday," 142 ; and " Julia," 147 ; and Russia, 195 ; a personal reference, 146 ; confers with Tsar Nicholas II, 141 ; his idealism, 141 ; inspires Rhodes Scholarships, 142 ; prison experiences, 143 ; the *Titanic* disaster, 147 ; work for Peace, 141.
Stewart-Richardson, Lady Constance, and classical dancing, 156 ; her snakes, 157.
Sthamer, Dr., as Ambassador, 226 ; patriotic unselfishness of, 227.
Stockmar, Baron, and Prince Consort, 3 ; as tutor of Edward VII, 4 ; power of, 4.
Stone Hall, Easton, 41.
Stresemann, G., 227
Sulkies, American, introduced into England, 74.
Sullivan, Sir Arthur, 93.
Sutherland, Millicent, Duchess of, 48 ; misfortunes of, 164.
Sweden, Crown Princess of, *see* Margaret of Connaught, Princess.

T

Taxation and the Great Estates, 240 ; increase in, 25.
Teck, Duchess of, an accomplished dancer, 262 ; and Queen Victoria, 262 ; her children, 263 ; her personal charm, 261.
Teck, Duke of, his generosity, 262.
Teck, Prince Francis of, at Easton, 263 ; death of, 264 ; fine qualities of, 263 ; godfather to Mercy Greville, 263 ; Chairman of Middlesex Hospital, 264.
Temperance reformers, 196.
Tennyson, Lord, aloofness of, 139.
Terry, Ellen, and Lord Beaconsfield, 60 ; at Easton, 177 ; cures Sir Henry Irving's " nerves," 178 ; memorial at Easton, 177 ; " sheer music " of her voice, 177.
Theatricals, private, at Chatsworth, 102.
Thorne, Will, a child-worker, 186, 233 ; and starving children, 233.
Thresh, Dr., and the Cottage Nurses, 211.
Throne and People, conflict between presaged, 4.
Tillett, Ben, and Kitchener, 222.
Tip, Earl of Warwick receives a, 96.
Tosti, Paolo, 93.
Trematon, Viscount, 263.
Trentham, 241.
Tsarevitch, delicacy of, 271 ; Rasputin's " cures " of, 272.
Tsarina, Alix, of Russia, early years, 270 ; faith in Rasputin, 270 ; hereditary mysticism of, 272 ; home life of the, 142 ; love of her son, 271 trials of, 270.
Tweedmouth, Lady, her receptions, 52.

V

Vane-Tempest, Lord Herbert, an earthquake incident, 253.
Vaughan, Kate, 197.
Victoria, Queen, and animals, 18 ; and Duchess of Teck, 262 ; and Duke of Connaught, 265 ; and marriage alliances, 2 ; and obeisance, 255 ; and workman M.P.s, 91 ; austerity toward her son Edward, 1 ; criticizes Mr. Gladstone, 91 ; Edward VII's affection for, 15 ; first meeting of author with, 2 ; formality of etiquette, 254 ; franchise, views on, 277 ; girlish impressions of, 1 ; gracious note to Duchess of Sutherland, 48 ; her political preferences, 4 ; idealization of Prince Consort, 4 ; kindness of, 1 ; " Life and Letters of," 23, 277 ; remarkable character of, 2 ; rigidity of outlook, 1 ; swayed by the Prince Consort, 3 ; temperamentally an autocrat, 2.
Victorian era, comparison with to-day, 286 ; environment in, 277 ; stalwarts of, 287.
Victoria, Princess, 265.
Viviani, Réné, and the New Republic, 149.
Votes, power of influencing, 25.

W

Waldeck - Pyrmont, Princess Helen of, 60.
Wallace, Sir Donald Mackenzie, 192, 194.
Wallace, Sir Richard, a misogynist, 176 ; as " Peeping Tom," 176 ; his gift to the nation, 176.
Walsh, Stephen, 186.
Warwick Castle, a museum, 241 ; state rooms at, 249.
Warwick, Earl of, receives a tip, 96.
Warwick, Frances, Countess of, advice from J. Choate, 119 ; and " confidences," 93 ; and Robert Blatchford, 42 ; and the Court, 276 ; and William Waldorf Astor, 109 ; a precedence predicament, 101 ; a Royal proposal of marriage, 59 ; as interpreter for French and Clemenceau, 217 ; aspirations for future, xiv ; as Poor Law Guardian, 188 ; as writer, 109 ; at Hever, 110 ; at Holyrood, 199 ; at Viceregal Lodge, Ireland, 170 ; childhood, 29 ; childhood's reactions, xiv ; disastrous financial experience, 208 ; engagement of, 61 ; first and last cocktail, 119 ; first meets Lloyd George, 136 ; first vital experience in the Labour movement, 233 ; friendship with Edward VII, 16 ; ideals for Easton, 43 ; influenced by Blatchford, 188 ; letter from Lord Esher, 275 ; letter from Queen Alexandra, 276 ; plans *Outspoken Review*, 207 ; reconciles Lord Rosebery and Mr. Asquith, 134 ; revolt against tradition, 28 ; Royal criticism of views, 29 ; satisfaction in Socialism, 43 ; severance from the Marlborough House Set, 275 ; starts Elinor Glyn in literature, 159 ; W. W. Astor's resentment of her Socialism, 116 ; youthful days of, 55.
Warwick, Guy, Earl of, letters from Front, 6 ; visits Nicholas II, 270 ; with Edward, Prince of Wales, in Great War, 6.
Warwick, Lord and Lady, collectors of *objets d'art*, 248.
Watts, G. F., at Warwick Castle, 175.
Week-ends, inception of, 97.

Welbeck Abbey, an amazing pile, 251.
Wellesley, Colonel F., 197.
Wellington, Evelyn, Duchess of, 198.
Wells, H. G., and Bernard Shaw, 151 ; and Colonel House, 122 ; as conversationalist, 122 ; discusses *St. Joan*, 152 ; home charades, 181 ; on armaments, 122.
Wells, Mrs. H. G., illness of, 150 ; splendid character of, 150.
Westminster, Duke of, and Eaton Hall, 250.
Weston Birt, now a school, 249.
William II of Germany, and Edward VII, 10 ; and Empress Frederick, 13 ; his appreciation of beauty, 11.
Wilson, Miss Muriel, an amateur actress, 102.
Wilson, President Woodrow, a winning failure, 121 ; his high idealism, 121.
Wimborne, Lord, 249.
Windsor Castle, Lord Warwick lost in, 200 ; visits to, 256.
Wireless, the, in rural villages, 245.
Wolff, Sir Henry Drummond, and the Fourth Party, 66
Woman, the Victorian, xiii.
Women, votes for, 278.
Working men in Parliament, 203.
Worth, M. Jean, an artist in dress, 160.

Y

Yates, Edmund, publishes "The Letters of Elizabeth," 159.
Young people, and night-clubs, 197 ; freedom for, to-day, 287 ; of to-day, 197.
Ypres, Earl of, and Clemenceau, 216 ; and France, 216 ; and Earl Haig, 222 ; a prophecy, 219 ; at Easton, 218 ; at Reval, 14 ; on war-readiness, 218.

Z

Zangwill, Israel, and Germany, 226.

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49

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